



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

## THESIS

**A RETURN TO EUROPE: POLAND AND WESTERN  
SECURITY STRUCTURES SINCE 1991**

by

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December 2014

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**A RETURN TO EUROPE: POLAND AND WESTERN SECURITY  
STRUCTURES SINCE 1991**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Poland is arguably the leading example of successful democratization and Westernization within Central and Eastern Europe. This thesis explores how Poland's participation in Western security structures has enabled it to reintegrate into Europe, emerging as one of the most politically influential and economically successful democratic nations from the former communist bloc.

The steps and milestones of Poland's accession to membership in NATO and the European Union, along with Poland's participation in the Weimar Triangle, provide insight into Poland's military, economic, and political transformations since 1991. This thesis analyzes Poland's dramatic increase in participation in these Western security institutions and identifies where Poland has taken on a leadership role. In addition, this thesis explores to what extent Poland is likely to deepen its integration in each institution in the foreseeable future.

This thesis concludes that one reason for Poland's successful integration into the West is the country's pursuit of membership in Western security institutions. Enrollment in these organizations required Poland to accomplish a drastic domestic overhaul affecting all sectors and levels of government. The result is that Poland now stands as a stable democratic nation in a region where such an outcome was not inevitable.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EC	European Communities
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defense Community
EEC	European Economic Communities
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
IFOR	Implementation Force
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan
KFOR	Kosovo Force
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
NSS	National Security Strategy
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OUP	Operation Unified Protector
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PHARE	Poland and Hungarian Assistance for Restructuring their Economies
SFOR	Stabilization Force
WEU	Western European Union

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION**

This thesis explores how Poland has been able to use Western security structures to effectively reintegrate into Europe, emerging as one of the more politically influential and economically successful democratic nations from the former communist bloc. The criteria for joining Western security structures such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) proved to be critical in assuring Poland's prosperous transition to democracy and a Western economic model. This thesis also examines Poland's critical interregional relationships, notably its trilateral partnership with France and Germany known as the Weimar Triangle, and explains how this unique organization also supported Poland's return to the European mainstream.

The specific steps and milestones of Poland's acceptance into NATO and the EU, along with Poland's participation in the Weimar Triangle, provide insight into Poland's military, economic, and political transformations since 1991. This thesis analyzes Poland's dramatic increase in participation with these Western security institutions and identifies where Poland has taken on a leadership role. In addition, this thesis explores to what extent Poland is likely to deepen its integration in each institution in the foreseeable future and how Poland has attempted to influence these strategic institutions to pursue policies directly in support of its national key priorities.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

Poland is arguably the leading example of successful democratization and Westernization within Central and Eastern Europe. In less than 25 years, Poland has transitioned from functioning as a Soviet satellite state to charting its own course as a fully independent and integrated nation within the European Union. Unfortunately, other states within the region have not fared as well, with the current situation in Ukraine being a prime example. It is critical to examine Poland's successful Westernization in order to understand exactly how this transformation occurred and, in doing so, provide a possible

roadmap for other Central and Eastern European countries that are struggling to make similar political and military adjustments.

In addition, an analytical review of Poland's transformation from a communist country to an ardent United States ally is vital to U.S. leadership. Poland has proven to be a strong supporter of U.S. interests. If the United States intends to maintain this valuable allegiance, its policy makers must understand the implications of dealing with Poland. From the perspective of the United States, Poland may be a relatively small country. However, its geographic location and increasing regional influence place Poland in a unique position to support American interests within an unpredictable portion of Europe. The United States must also remain mindful of Poland's expectations from this bilateral relationship. As a country on the eastern fringe of NATO and the EU, Poland is constantly looking for additional security guarantees in the event future Russian imperial aspirations should lead Moscow to undertake coercion or aggression.<sup>1</sup> Issues such as missile defense and U.S. basing play a prominent role in Polish domestic politics and strategic policy.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, key members within the security institutions that Poland has joined, notably NATO and the EU, should understand how Poland has been affected through these memberships. Recent versions of Poland's National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy tell the story of what role Poland expects to play within each organization and how exactly Poland plans to fulfil its new obligations. As NATO has supplemented its collective defense mission with the additional core tasks of crisis management and cooperative security within and beyond Europe, and as the EU has expanded its scope of ambition into the realm of a Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), Poland has been forced to adapt to these new challenges politically and militarily. Equally important is an analysis of how Poland has managed to influence NATO and the EU. This thesis investigates how and to what extent Poland has attempted

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1 Krzysztof Bobinski, "Poland and Eastern Europe," in *European Foreign Policies: Does Europe Still Matter?* ed. Ronald Tiersky and John Van Oudenaren (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 274.

2 Andrew A. Michta, "Polish Hard Power: Investing in the Military as Europe Cuts Back," American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, no. 7 (December 2013), 6.



to steer these organizations in directions consistent with Poland's national priorities and interests.

### **C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES**

The end of the Cold War was seen as a great victory for Western societies, but it did not manage to create a more peaceful and stable world. On the contrary, the break-up of the Soviet Union created 15 new nations almost overnight and greatly complicated political relations across the continent. This was shortly followed by the dissolution of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, adding another seven more countries to an already precarious region. While the dissolution of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia was relatively peaceful, the break-up of Yugoslavia into Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia showed the rest of Europe that this period of political transition would require external oversight and intervention. The problems that these new countries faced were not confined to domestic power struggles, and they had enduring implications for international security.

According to David Yost, one problem specific to NATO since the end of the Cold War has been the requirement to “redefine NATO’s purposes and to endow it with new roles in addition to its traditional core missions of collective defense and dialogue with adversaries.”<sup>3</sup> These new roles have not been clearly defined by NATO, but they can be broadly categorized as cooperation with former adversaries and other non-NATO countries, and operations conducted beyond the borders of NATO allies.<sup>4</sup> In the 2010 Strategic Concept, the Allies defined NATO’s new tasks in addition to collective defense as crisis management and cooperative security.<sup>5</sup>

Another problem for NATO involves future enlargement of the alliance. How far is NATO willing to go and at what cost? What kind of impact could enlargement have

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<sup>3</sup> David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance’s New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 72.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> David S. Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2014), 171–172.

on future cohesion? Will future enlargement be seen by Russia as a direct threat to Russian national security?

Poland's integration into the European Union also comes with a set of unique problems. As with NATO enlargement, EU expansion also comes at a cost, albeit more of an economic burden than a military one. Poland has proven itself to be a rare economic success story, but this still came at a substantial financial cost shared by other EU members.<sup>6</sup> Since its admission in 2004, Poland has received over 40 billion euros from the EU.<sup>7</sup> This money has largely gone toward major infrastructure upgrades, which have proven to be a worthwhile and productive investment for the EU.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps the most complicated problems stem from Russia and its historical influence over Poland. In 1989–1991 Poland made a clean break from the Warsaw Pact and communism. While Poland maintained economic and diplomatic relations with Russia, Warsaw looked west toward the European Union and the United States, and joined NATO and the EU. However, the deep-rooted ties that Poland had built with the dominant republic of the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1991 could not be so easily severed. The threat of an economic or energy backlash from Russia must always be considered by Polish politicians. Poland has thrown its support behind the United States in controversial decisions such as the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq because it hopes to prove itself as a faithful ally should Russian aggression arise again.<sup>9</sup> U.S.-Polish cooperation in missile defense has also exacerbated tensions with Russia.

This thesis investigates the hypothesis that one reason for Poland's successful integration into the West is the country's pursuit of membership in Western security institutions such as NATO, the EU, and the Weimar Triangle. Association with these organizations required Poland to accomplish a drastic domestic overhaul affecting all sectors and levels of government. The result of this reformation is that Poland now stands

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6 Mitchell A. Orenstein, "Six Markets to Watch: Poland," *Foreign Affairs*, December 6, 2013, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/140336/mitchell-a-orenstein/six-markets-to-watch-poland>.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Bobinski, "Poland and Eastern Europe," 274.

as a stable and successful democratic nation in a region where such an outcome was not inevitable.

Poland has, since 1991, not only sought membership in these key Western security institutions, but has also attempted to influence these institutions in the pursuit of critical national priorities. Despite the problems and concerns mentioned above, Poland resolutely sought to join these institutions as a guarantee for its national sovereignty. Poland appears to have prioritized two objectives: military preparedness for national and collective defense, and political solidarity with the leading states in these organizations. Both of these aims have been visible in Poland's activities in NATO and the EU, as well as in its trilateral cooperation with France and Germany in the Weimar Triangle.

#### **D. LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is no shortage of literature and information covering the end of the Cold War and resultant rebirth of many former Soviet bloc countries. With the enormous amount of material available on the subject, a methodical approach to narrow the focus to Poland's subsequent integration in Western security structures will be applied. Sources for this thesis include other theses with a relevant theme, books written on the topic, applicable official government documents, and appropriate scholarly articles.

A review of theses previously written at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) provided a solid foundation for understanding what portions of this topic have already been covered and identified gaps that need to be filled in order to make the scholarly literature more complete. Beata Gonzales' 2011 thesis titled "NATO, Russia, Poland, and Ukraine: Perspectives on the Ukraine Candidacy for NATO Membership" provides a brief history of relevant policies in Poland in the post-communist reform period. Gonzales takes a close look at Polish—U.S. relations, describing in detail how the two countries have become close allies and identifying the impact of 9/11 on their relationship. Gonzales also provides a brief synopsis of how Poland positioned itself in

order to be accepted into NATO. This thesis delivers a unique perspective on the broad implications of NATO enlargement.<sup>10</sup>

Jaroslav Jablonski's thesis "The Key Role of NATO Accession on Poland's Democratic Transition" is slightly dated, having been written in 2002, but it provides a solid account of events during a specific period in Poland's political transition. Jablonski finds that "among the obstacles to this process was a western ignorance about domestic social challenges and political conflicts."<sup>11</sup> This thesis highlights the effects of Western ignorance when dealing with post-Communist countries and also illuminates the challenges faced by Poland in the realm of civil-military relations. NATO's requirement for democratic civilian control over the military became a major hurdle that Poland eventually overcame, but not before changing its political landscape.<sup>12</sup>

Piotr Bieniek examines Polish defense policy in his 2006 thesis "Polish Defence Policy in the Context of National Security Strategy." Bieniek's thesis analyzes Polish defense policy since Poland joined NATO and the EU, and discusses how it has been shaped not only through geography and history, but also through membership in—and responsibility to—these two organizations. This thesis also examines how Poland manages to keep a balance between pursuing its national interests and meeting the demands of its allies.<sup>13</sup>

The three theses all contain relevant information on Poland's integration in Western security structures, but none of them captures fully the scope of the security structures Poland is involved with or focuses much attention on Poland's specific role

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10 Beata I. Gonzales, "NATO, Russia, Poland, and Ukraine: Perspectives on the Ukraine Candidacy for NATO Membership" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2011), [http://calhoun.nps.edu/public/bitstream/handle/10945/5692/11Jun\\_Gonzales.pdf?sequence=1](http://calhoun.nps.edu/public/bitstream/handle/10945/5692/11Jun_Gonzales.pdf?sequence=1).

11 Jaroslav Jablonski, "The Key Role of NATO Accession on Poland's Democratic Transition" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2002), [http://calhoun.nps.edu/public/bitstream/handle/10945/5076/02Sep\\_Jablonski.pdf?sequence=1](http://calhoun.nps.edu/public/bitstream/handle/10945/5076/02Sep_Jablonski.pdf?sequence=1).

12 Ibid.

13 Piotr S. Bieniek, "Polish Defense Policy in the Context of National Security Strategy" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2006), [http://calhoun.nps.edu/public/bitstream/handle/10945/2795/06Jun\\_Bieniek.pdf?sequence=1](http://calhoun.nps.edu/public/bitstream/handle/10945/2795/06Jun_Bieniek.pdf?sequence=1).

within each Western security organization. Each study's focus differs from that of this thesis.

Several books have been authored on Central and Eastern Europe after the Cold War, NATO enlargement, and the emergence of the European Union as a security actor. Poland seems to have played a central role in each of these developments, often being influenced internally, and more recently, attempting to exert its own influence externally.

In *Poland and NATO: A Study in Civil-Military Relations* Jeffrey Simon examines the difficulties that Poland endured during its political and military transition from 1989 till the mid-1990s, when democratic stability finally seemed reliable. In order to obtain membership in NATO, Poland was forced to completely reform its political and military structure. Simon chronicles this journey, complete with many failures and achievements, and provides an intimate look at the civil-military transformation required to Westernize a nation.<sup>14</sup>

David Yost tells another story of transition, one occurring in NATO after the demise of its main antagonist, the Soviet Union. In *NATO Transformed*, Yost describes in some detail the “origins, evolution, and prospects of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s new roles in international security.”<sup>15</sup> These new roles can be broadly categorized as: cooperation with former adversaries and other non-NATO countries, and conducting crisis management and peace operations outside the territories of member nations. The chapter focusing on cooperation with former adversaries offers a roadmap of accession for Poland and other countries looking to join NATO, from joining the North Atlantic Cooperation Council to participating in Partnership for Peace. Details of national debates among alliance members in regard to enlargement offer insight into the perceived dangers of NATO enlargement.<sup>16</sup>

In *European Foreign Policies: Does Europe Still Matter?*, the question of European integration is explored through the lens of the European Union. Krzysztof

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<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey Simon, *Poland and NATO: A Study in Civil-military Relations* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Bobinski focuses his chapter on Poland and Eastern Europe. This chapter covers not only EU expansion, but also the implications of NATO membership for Poland.<sup>17</sup>

In *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, Jolyon Howorth provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), known since December 2009 as CSDP. This book establishes how and why the EU decided to take serious steps toward becoming a security actor. It discusses in detail the processes and challenges the European Union went through in order to make this ambitious venture a reality. In addition, Howorth describes the key roles that states, including Poland, have played in making CSDP a credible international instrument. Specifically, the book recounts Poland's journey into the EU and describes how Poland has established itself among European nations as a capable security provider.<sup>18</sup>

Aside from theses and books, official national documents are able to provide an authoritative look at how governments plan to implement policy. A thesis on Poland's integration in Western security structures would be incomplete without examining how Poland's National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Defense Strategy (NDS) have transformed since the country joined NATO and the EU.

Poland published an NSS in 2003 and 2007. With the 2003 NSS coming four years after Poland joined NATO and the 2007 NSS issued three years after Poland entered the EU, these documents encapsulated major transition points in Poland's national policies and international responsibilities. Poland's 2003 NSS acknowledged the country's increased role within its region and identified NATO and a bilateral agreement with the United States as the principal guarantees of its national security.<sup>19</sup> The 2007

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17 Krzysztof Bobinski, "Poland and Eastern Europe," in *European Foreign Policies: Does Europe Still Matter?*, ed. Ronald Tiersky and John Van Oudenaren (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010).

18 Jolyon Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

19 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2003), 1, <http://www.defesa.gov.pl/projetosweb/livrobranco/arquivos/pdf/Pol%20c3%b4nia%202003.pdf>.

NSS mentioned Poland as a key leader in support of CSDP and acknowledged concerns about a weakened United States position in Europe.<sup>20</sup>

Poland published its NDS in 2000 and 2009. The nine-year time span between these two documents allows for an analysis of how Poland's view of defense strategy changed. The 2000 NDS was published only one year after Poland joined NATO and one year before the jarring security implications of 9/11. In this relatively short document of 23 pages, NATO is referred to 39 times.<sup>21</sup> Poland's 2009 NDS had a completely different perspective on security matters. The 2009 NDS mentioned the conflict in Georgia and stated that, although large scale war still seemed unlikely in Europe, the likelihood of an armed conflict near Poland's border had increased, with Russia as the probable instigator.<sup>22</sup>

## **E. METHODS AND SOURCES**

This thesis will provide a historical study of Poland's relationship with each specific security institution. Poland's affiliation with NATO, the EU, and the Weimar Triangle will be examined separately. Major milestones in each relationship will be recounted. The effect of each institution on Polish policy will be determined, as well as any possible effects Poland may have had on the specific institution.

The thesis will then synthesize the findings concerning each institutional relationship in order to draw conclusions about how Poland will probably continue to operate and integrate with each organization in the future. Each of these relationships is dynamic and, although interrelated with the other security institutions to a degree, comes with distinct benefits and challenges. As Poland balances its national priorities with its responsibility to each security institution, these relationships will constantly be redefined.

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20 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2007), 4, <http://www.defesa.gov.pl/projetosweb/livrobranco/arquivos/pdf/Pol%20c3%b4nia%202007.pdf>.

21 The Ministry of the National Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2000), 6, [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/6086~v~The\\_National\\_Defense\\_Strategy\\_of\\_the\\_Republic\\_of\\_Poland.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/6086~v~The_National_Defense_Strategy_of_the_Republic_of_Poland.pdf).

22 The Ministry of the National Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2009), 7, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=156791>.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW**

This thesis examines how and to what extent Poland has managed to integrate effectively in key Western security structures and become a competent ally with democratic ideals. In order to analyze Poland's relationship with each Western security structure, a systematic approach is applied in order to investigate separately Poland's role and influence within each institution.

Chapter II is devoted to Poland's role in NATO, including Warsaw's interactions with the Allies during the years from the collapse of the Warsaw Pact (1991) to Poland's membership in the Alliance (1999). This chapter also discusses how Poland's role has evolved within the alliance from a new member to a competent contributor. An assessment of the future outlook for Poland within NATO concludes this portion of the thesis.

Chapter III focuses on the long road to Poland's membership in the EU in 2004. This chapter highlights the EU's rather recent pursuit of a Common Security and Defense Policy, concentrating on Poland's role within the CSDP and identifying specific military missions that Poland has been involved with. This section concludes with judgments about Poland's probable involvement in future CSDP operations, as influenced by domestic politics and the EU's desire to continue to develop CSDP as a credible tool.

Chapter IV focuses on Poland's participation in the Weimar Triangle. A brief history of the Weimar Triangle is reviewed in the first portion. Next, past and present goals of the Weimar Triangle are examined. Areas of cooperation within and beyond the Weimar Triangle are explored before concluding with an assessment of what roles the Weimar Triangle may play in the future.

Chapter V summarizes the main findings of the thesis.



## **II. POLAND'S INTEGRATION INTO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION**

In 1989, Poland was a member of the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance, more commonly known as the Warsaw Pact. In July 1991 this organization of communist states was officially dissolved, and in 1999 Poland was formally admitted into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). How did Poland, in a span of 10 years, manage to transition from being an adversary of the West to an influential member of an alliance committed to democracy and the maintenance of security across the territory of the alliance? Poland's conversion from a communist puppet state to a democratic leader in the region was not achieved without challenges and setbacks. One major step in this conversion was Poland's accession into NATO.

This chapter examines Poland's role in NATO, including its journey from Warsaw Pact participant to Alliance member during the 1990s. In addition, this chapter analyzes Poland's integration into NATO through its military reorganization and specific mission participation. Finally, an assessment of the future outlook for Poland within NATO is provided.

### **A. POLAND'S ACCESSION INTO NATO**

Poland's accession into NATO would not have been possible without the dissolution of NATO's largest threat, the Warsaw Pact. The publicized intent of the communist security organization was to promote increased military cooperation among the member countries to ensure a secure Europe, but to the West, the Warsaw Pact remained shrouded in mystery throughout the entire Cold War.<sup>23</sup> The Warsaw Pact was established in 1955, but came to a quiet end in 1991. The communist alliance lasted only 36 years, but at its height, it was a formidable power capable of waging a devastating war throughout Europe.<sup>24</sup> Ironically, the only military engagements the Warsaw Pact

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<sup>23</sup> Peter Gosztory, "Shield and Sword: Thoughts on the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Warsaw Pact," *Military Review* 55, no. 12 (1975): 81.

<sup>24</sup> Robin Alison Remington, "The Warsaw Pact: Communist Coalition Politics in Action," *The Yearbook of World Affairs* 27 (1973): 171–172.

undertook were against internal strife, and one of the biggest military alliances the world has seen disappeared without firing a single shot against the West.

After the disbanding of the Warsaw Pact, Poland's accession into NATO was not a preordained event. Drastic changes in civil-military relations would be needed before Poland could be credibly considered for membership in the Alliance. In *Poland and NATO: A Study in Civil-Military Relations*, Jeffrey Simon states, "Between 1988 and 1993 Poland's democratic reform of the military was marked by governmental instability and constitutional and defense/legal ambiguities in the face of a self-confident military long accustomed to civilian incompetence."<sup>25</sup> It soon became clear that the euphoria of escaping communist oppression would give way to the reality of rebuilding a nation and rewiring the minds of its leaders.

The key to modernizing Poland's civil-military relations was to ensure democratic oversight of the military apparatus.<sup>26</sup> According to Simon, there are four main factors used to measure the effectiveness of government oversight.<sup>27</sup> First, the constitution should clearly demarcate a division of authority between the president and the government. This division must spell out who commands the military during wartime while still respecting the legitimacy and upholding the powers of the government. Second, the Parliament's role of military oversight should extend to fiscal control of the defense budget. Third, a civilian defense ministry should manage strategic planning of all defense and personnel matters during peacetime. This should include an open flow of information to the public and the Parliament on how resources are being utilized. Finally, the government needs to actively work toward restoring military prestige, trustworthiness, and accountability. This would require a wide range of improvements from force modernization to an official code of conduct for soldiers.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Jeffrey Simon, *Poland and NATO: A Study in Civil-Military Relations* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 25.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 2–4.

With these ideals in place as guidelines Poland proceeded to restructure its government and military according to a Western model, although the process was often complicated by lingering political habits left over from the communist era and political instability. From 1988 to 1993, Poland cycled through six prime ministers, five defense ministers, and two diametrically opposite presidents.<sup>29</sup> The period from September 1993 to December 1995 saw a more stable government with fewer political parties as a result of improved electoral laws.<sup>30</sup> This period, however, was marred by a civil-military crisis at Drawsko. The event, in which the General Staff failed to support Defense Minister Piotr Kolodziejczyk and seemed willing to subordinate itself under the President Lech Walesa, highlighted failures within the constitution to properly delegate presidential and governmental authority.<sup>31</sup> The election of 1995, which brought President Aleksander Kwasniewski to power, also ushered in significant headway toward more civil-military reform. Over the next two years, civilian oversight of the military continued to expand throughout the Defense Ministry and paved the way to formalizing the progressive changes in the 1997 constitution.<sup>32</sup> After the ratification of the 1997 constitution the president and the government continued to test the limits of their powers, but civilian management and oversight of the Defense Ministry clearly improved.<sup>33</sup> By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Poland's military still required a major overhaul in everything from equipment to personnel standards, but the progressive changes in civil-military relations during the 1990s paved the way for these eventual improvements and showed the West that the government in Warsaw was serious about becoming a modern democratic state. The military advances would eventually come with NATO membership and active participation.

As Poland's civil-military relations came in line with Western standards it became possible for Poland to realistically envision a permanent partnership with NATO.

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<sup>29</sup> Simon, *Poland and NATO*, 25.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 147.

Poland's first official step toward NATO membership occurred through participation in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). In *NATO Transformed*, David Yost explains, "The NACC was composed of sixteen NATO countries and twenty-two other states, all 'former adversaries.' This new group encompassed all the members of the Warsaw Pact, including the successor states of the Soviet Union, and Slovakia and the Czech Republic."<sup>34</sup> The goal of the NACC was to move beyond routine communication between NATO nations and the former communist bloc.<sup>35</sup> The NACC, as defined in the 1991 Rome Declaration, was intended to build "a more institutional relationship of consultation and cooperation on political and security issues."<sup>36</sup> By limiting NACC membership to NATO and its former adversaries, it was hoped that the NACC would be instrumental in defusing tensions remaining from the Cold War.<sup>37</sup>

Assemblies of the NACC were held fairly consistently, with foreign ministers meeting annually, ambassador level participation occurring every two months, and other consultations being held if the need arose.<sup>38</sup> NACC activities initially consisted of workshops, seminars, and conferences, causing it to be branded by some observers as "a gigantic talking shop."<sup>39</sup> Over time, however, the agenda expanded to include complex and penetrating topics such as air defense, military procurement, economic planning, and disarmament technologies.<sup>40</sup>

The main opponent of NACC formation and activity was France.<sup>41</sup> France's reservations toward the NACC stemmed from several factors.<sup>42</sup> First, the French were

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<sup>34</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*: 95.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>36</sup> Rome Declaration, November 1991, quoted in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 94.

<sup>37</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 96.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>39</sup> Jonathan Eyal, "NATO's Enlargement: Anatomy of a Decision," *International Affairs* 73 (October 1997): 701, quoted in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 95.

<sup>40</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 94–95.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 96.

afraid that the NACC could somehow negatively impact the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the predecessor of today's Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Second, the 1966 withdrawal of France from NATO's integrated military structure meant that French defense ministers had not participated in NATO meetings for twenty-five years, and President François Mitterrand was not inclined to alter this practice. As a result, any NACC meetings with defense ministers were seen as informal.<sup>43</sup>

It did not take long for NACC members to realize that, as groundbreaking as their organization was, its ability to act was limited in scope.<sup>44</sup> The assembly was a great place to have all concerned parties listen to complaints, but the governments participating were hesitant to take any meaningful action. This eventually caused the topics of the sessions to encompass more realistic issues such as peacekeeping, scientific and environment cooperation, and arms control verification.<sup>45</sup> In 1997 the NACC was replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.<sup>46</sup>

During an informal meeting in October 1993, U.S. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin proposed a Partnership for Peace (PfP) program to other NATO defense ministers. PfP became a formal NATO program three months later in January 1994 and served as another key stepping stone for Poland's eventual accession.<sup>47</sup> In the North Atlantic Council declaration of 11 January 1994, the purpose behind PfP was explained as follows:

At a pace and scope determined by the capacity and desire of the individual participating states, we will work in concrete ways towards transparency in defence budgeting, promoting democratic control of defense ministries, joint planning, joint military exercises, and creating an

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<sup>43</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 95–96.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 96–97.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 96–97.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 97.

ability to operate with NATO forces in such fields as peacekeeping, search and rescue and humanitarian operations, and others as may be agreed.<sup>48</sup>

The PfP program differs from the NACC in two unique ways.<sup>49</sup> First, the PfP relationships are intended to be deeper and more structured than a country's affiliation with the NACC. Second, and more importantly, the PfP is an individualized program between NATO and the partner state. This arrangement allows NATO—acting as the senior partner—to tailor specific activities, exercises, and exchanges with each partner. The result is a steady increase of operational capability tailored to a specific nation's needs.<sup>50</sup>

The Partnership for Peace program was initially criticized by some as a delay tactic used to postpone the question of NATO enlargement.<sup>51</sup> The critics were soon silenced as PfP proved to be a worthwhile and versatile arrangement allowing some countries to use it as a platform to express serious desire for NATO membership while other nations simply used the PfP program to foster cooperation or as a learning experience.<sup>52</sup> In 1998 Yost wrote, “PfP has rapidly become a pan-European security institution with greater military and political content than the OSCE.”<sup>53</sup> The success of the PfP programs spans a range of activities such as exercises, exchanges, education, and training. Real world results of cooperation were seen during the Bosnian conflict under the Implementation Force (IFOR).<sup>54</sup> The humanitarian crisis saw Partners providing military forces directly into a NATO command structure. This type of experience does more for increasing transparency and interoperability than any type of conference or workshop. For Poland, PfP proved to be a tool to expand regional cooperation. By participating in military exercises and operations with the Czech Republic, Estonia,

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48 North Atlantic Council declaration, January 11, 1994, par 14, quoted in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 97.

49 Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 97–99.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., 98

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid..

54 Ibid.

Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, and other countries, Poland has been able to use these shared experiences to bridge political difficulties with its neighbors.<sup>55</sup>

As participation within the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and the PfP programs increased, the question of NATO enlargement could not be ignored for long. Although initially held at bay by most politicians in NATO nations in the early 1990s, by the end of 1993 the question of NATO enlargement required answering and became an issue of debate within the Alliance.<sup>56</sup> As the U.S. political administration transitioned in 1993, with President Clinton taking office, a strong interest in NATO enlargement arose from the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>57</sup> By 1994, the prospect of U.S. leadership on the subject of enlargement signaled to the rest of the Alliance that the issue was worthy of serious debate.<sup>58</sup>

As can be expected from a multinational organization requiring consensus, the deliberations on the topic were thorough. In Yost's words, "NATO subsequently decided to study the questions of 'how' and 'why' before tackling the questions of 'who' and 'when.'"<sup>59</sup> The first concrete steps were taken in December 1994, when the North Atlantic Council decided to initiate a study of the process of how NATO could be enlarged. The results of this inquiry were expressed in a document released by NATO in September 1995 entitled *Study on NATO Enlargement*.<sup>60</sup> The study listed seven rationales for NATO enlargement which can be summarized as follows: to encourage and support democratic reform; to foster cooperation, consultation, and consensus building among new members; to promote good neighbor relations; to emphasize common defence; to reinforce integration while curbing disintegration along ethnic and territorial

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<sup>55</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 97–99.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 100–103.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

lines; to strengthen NATO's ability to contribute to European and international security; and to strengthen the Trans-Atlantic partnership.<sup>61</sup>

With these guidelines in place, the questions of "who" and "when" took center stage. NATO's first enlargement since the end of the Cold War would be offered to the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. The invitation was formalized during the 1997 NATO summit in Madrid. With strong political support from the United States, the goal was to have the new members officially inducted by the fiftieth anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1999.<sup>62</sup>

Even as the political will for enlargement was consolidated throughout the Alliance, the degree of support or reservation on the subject within each NATO nation varied. The U.S. Senate voted 80–19 in favor of expansion, although plenty of internal debate expressed the serious concerns of some politicians who feared that a move toward NATO enlargement would dampen Russian relations.<sup>63</sup> In Germany, the arguments for NATO expansion into Central and Eastern Europe included a desire to stabilize the country's eastern border and, as Yost remarked, "the sense of moral and political responsibility for the fate of these countries."<sup>64</sup> The debate on enlargement garnered little attention in the French public sphere, but was hotly contested among officials.<sup>65</sup> Up until May 1995, with the election of French President Jacques Chirac, France openly expressed reservations toward NATO expansion and, at a minimum, sought to delay the process.<sup>66</sup> By 1997, however, France not only supported bringing the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland into the Alliance, but fought to extend the invitation to Romania.<sup>67</sup>

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61 *Study on NATO Enlargement*, (Brussels: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, September 1995), par 3, quoted in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 103–104.

62 Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 104.

63 *Ibid.*, 105.

64 *Ibid.*, 110.

65 *Ibid.*, 112.

66 *Ibid.*, 113.

67 *Ibid.*, 104–114.



The reluctance toward NATO enlargement was not only an internal issue among NATO member states; it also derived from legitimate strategic concerns. According to Yost:

Interviews with well-informed observers in several NATO nations suggest that four reservations about NATO enlargement are particularly salient: its potential impact on Alliance cohesion; the implications for the “also-rans,” the unsuccessful applicants in the first wave of post-Cold War enlargement; the risk of an unnecessary confrontation with Russia; and the gravity of accepting new collective defense obligations.<sup>68</sup>

The first concern, Alliance cohesion, was expressed by critics who believed that NATO decision making is already burdensome enough. By admitting three new members from such a volatile region, the opponents of expansion argued, NATO would turn its deliberations into stalemates.<sup>69</sup>

The second reservation highlighted an important question, what to do with the “also-rans.” In other words, how could NATO assuage the fears of the nations not accepted during the first round of enlargement and assure those same nations that NATO’s door remains open? The Allies agreed that, as Yost put it, “NATO enlargement must be an ‘inclusive’ process of indefinite scope and duration. It appears that an open-ended process is seen as the necessary complement to taking in only a few new Allies.”<sup>70</sup>

The third factor recognizes a genuine security threat, antagonizing Russia.<sup>71</sup> A clear contradiction exists between NATO’s assertion that enlargement is not meant as a reaction to a Russian threat and the reality that most Central and Eastern European states are pursuing NATO membership to prevent future Russian aggression. To this day, when entertaining the thought of further enlargement, NATO must walk a fine line between functioning as an independent security organization and respecting Russian interests and sensitivities.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 117.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 117–118.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 121–124.

The fourth issue tackles a broader question, will NATO be able to accept and honor its new collective defense obligations?<sup>73</sup> Critics of enlargement point out that the reasons for expanding NATO seem to refer to collective security rather than collective defense. In their eyes, criteria for NATO admission should be based on a nation's tangible contribution to territorial defense, not its implementation of democratic principles or successful civil-military reform. Some proponents of enlargement do not see collective defense as an Alliance priority because they do not view Russia as a credible threat in the short term. NATO remains confident that it can fulfil its Article 5 guarantee.<sup>74</sup>

## **B. POLAND'S ROLE IN NATO**

Since Poland's accession into NATO on 12 March 1999 the country has grown into a willing and capable Alliance member. How has Poland effectively integrated into NATO and become one of the organization's most active participants? This transformation will be considered in detail from two vantage points. First, an analysis of Poland's military reorganization and defense strategy evolution will be conducted. This will be accomplished by a brief review of the following documents: the 2000 National Defense Strategy (NDS) of the Republic of Poland, the 2003 National Security Strategy (NSS) of the Republic of Poland, Poland's 2007 National Security Strategy, and the 2009 National Defense Strategy. The review will highlight the changes required to modernize Poland's military forces. Second, Poland's role within NATO will be explored through its involvement in NATO operations and its contribution to specific missions. While still a PfP country, Poland participated in IFOR and SFOR, the crisis management operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in support of the Dayton Accords. Poland went on to contribute to the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, as well as other smaller operations. Poland's maturity as an Alliance member can be calibrated in the ever increasing value of its contributions to these various missions. Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya, on the other hand, provided an

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<sup>73</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 124.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 124–130.

example of Poland's domestic politics and assessment of national strategic priorities limiting support for a NATO operation.

According to the Ministry of Defence 2001 *White Paper*, by officially joining NATO, Poland “acquired a full and credible guarantee of security and the possibility to participate in collective defense.”<sup>75</sup> Although this was a momentous event for Poland's national security, it came with an obligation to update the NSS and NDS in order to meet looming NATO responsibilities. The importance of the Alliance membership was immediately seen in Poland's 2000 National Defense Strategy. NATO was referred to thirty-nine times in the twenty-three page document. Section 3 of the NDS states, “The national defense strategy of the Republic of Poland, whilst considering the national interests and conditions, is also correlated to NATO's strategy.”<sup>76</sup> An early commitment to NATO's strategic vision emerged in the NDS when Poland acknowledged that “The risk of large scale war has decreased significantly.”<sup>77</sup> This type of statement stands in sharp contrast to Poland's threat perception during the Cold War and recognizes the role of NATO as a peace provider.

Poland's 2003 National Security Strategy continued the themes from the 2000 NDS, but also took into account the jarring security implications of 9/11. The 2003 NSS even stated that international terrorism was the most serious threat currently facing Poland and identified NATO, along with a bilateral agreement with the United States, as the principal guarantees of its national security.<sup>78</sup> By 2003, Poland looked to play an increased security role within its region. The NSS declared, “Poland shall develop bilateral cooperation with its neighbors and also other countries in the region for the

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75 Ministry of National Defence of Poland, *White Paper*, 2001, 5, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?Ing=en&id=156792>.

76 The Ministry of the National Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2000), 6, [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/6086~v~The\\_National\\_Defense\\_Strategy\\_of\\_the\\_Republic\\_of\\_Poland.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/6086~v~The_National_Defense_Strategy_of_the_Republic_of_Poland.pdf).

77 The Ministry of the National Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, 5.

78 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2003), 1–6, <http://www.defesa.gov.br/projetosweb/livrobranco/arquivos/pdf/Pol%c3%b4nia%202003.pdf>.

benefit of all-around stabilization of the security situation in this part of Europe.”<sup>79</sup> In an article in *Contemporary Security Policy*, Laura Chappell of the University of Surrey observed that, due to the history of invasions in the region, it was paramount for Poland to keep Eastern Europe from becoming a “buffer zone or security grey area.”<sup>80</sup>

During the first five years of NATO membership Poland underwent a grand transition, delineating itself as a Central European nation with a commitment toward the West and casting off any remaining links to its communist past. Poland retained certain aspects of its defense identity during this period, but by embracing its role within NATO, Poland redefined its traditional views on national defense.

Recently Poland has grown into the role of a vocal country, integrated within NATO as a key nation with credible military forces. The 2007 NSS reaffirmed Poland’s commitment toward modernizing its military forces and advanced the state’s national security agenda. The document confirmed NATO as a fundamental element of national security and acknowledged that Poland saw itself as a regional leader in security affairs.<sup>81</sup> The 2007 NSS also expressed a mature and objective outlook toward the global security environment, conceding the weakened position of the United States due to the unpopular invasion of Iraq and the difficult operations in Afghanistan.<sup>82</sup> This was followed by a call for improved transatlantic relations and a “rapprochement of the views of allies on the most important international security issues.”<sup>83</sup> The 2007 NSS also proved to be prescient in its traditional cautious perception of Russia. The document predicted, “The Russian Federation, taking advantage of the rising energy prices, has been attempting

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79 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2003), 8.

80 Laura Chappell, “Poland’s Shifting Security and Defence Roles: Implications for the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP),” *Contemporary Security Policy* 31, no. 2 (2010): 4, doi: 10.1080/13523260.2010.491312.

81 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2007), 4, <http://www.defesa.gov.br/projetosweb/livrobranco/arquivos/pdf/Pol%c3%b4nia%202007.pdf>.

82 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, 6.

83 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, 6.

intensively to reinforce its position on a superregional level.”<sup>84</sup> In light of the 2008 Russo-Georgian war and the 2014 developments in Ukraine, it seems that Poland was correct in its assessment.

The security priorities and concerns that were identified in the 2007 NSS had a direct impact on the National Defense Strategy published by Poland in 2009. The 2009 NDS placed an emphasis on increased regional cooperation. Lessons from Afghanistan are echoed throughout the document, which asserted that, while the period of armed aggression during a conflict has been reduced, the post-conflict stage tends to be drawn out. The 2009 NDS also reiterated that asymmetrical threats were a prominent security risk and that the most serious danger continued to come from international terrorism.<sup>85</sup>

The documents reviewed above were instrumental in making the changes required to transform Poland into a reliable ally. The credibility of its military forces, however, could only be proven through participation in NATO operations. Poland found no shortage of opportunities to embed itself within the NATO military structure and take part in joint and combined campaigns. From its modest contributions during the 1995 Bosnian crisis to its robust effort throughout Afghanistan, Poland’s increased role within the Alliance has been noticeable.

Poland’s first NATO mission happened to be NATO’s first peacekeeping operation. Not an Alliance member yet, but an active participant in Partnership for Peace, Poland joined the Implementation Force (IFOR) in an effort code-named Operation Joint Endeavor (1995-1996) to enforce the Dayton peace agreement and put an end to the fighting in Bosnia. In the subsequent Stabilization Force (SFOR) operations Joint Guard (1996-1998) and Joint Forge (1998-2004) Poland worked alongside NATO member states and other PfP partners to uphold the peace process.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, 6.

<sup>85</sup> The Ministry of the National Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2009), 1–32, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=156791>.

<sup>86</sup> “Poles in NATO Missions,” *The Warsaw Voice*, October 4–11, 2009, <http://brukselanato.msz.gov.pl/resource/1dc8185a-f895-48e6-a78e-4bd873dec549>.

After the 1999 NATO air campaign in Kosovo, a UN Security Council-approved military operation known as Joint Guardian was established to keep the peace in the area. The NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR), composed of 50,000 soldiers from 30 nations, acted to prevent a humanitarian crisis.<sup>87</sup> Poland sent a battalion of troops to join International Task Force East.<sup>88</sup> Currently, Poland maintains 200 troops as part of KFOR. They are responsible for fighting organized crime while supporting local authorities and maintaining security.<sup>89</sup>

The two aforementioned operations were instrumental in easing Poland into the coalition environment and helped prepare the military for its herculean effort with the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. The mission of ISAF, according to a NATO webpage, is to “create the conditions whereby the Government of Afghanistan is able to exercise its authority throughout the country.”<sup>90</sup> As of 1 June 2014, Poland is contributing 968 troops to the ISAF mission.<sup>91</sup> Poland engaged in ISAF early on, sending 100 troops and support personnel into Afghanistan in March 2002.<sup>92</sup> As Polish forces continued to prove themselves on the battlefield, Poland’s contributions and responsibilities in the war effort increased. By 2010 Poland was responsible for the security of the Ghazni province and had over 2,600 personnel in Afghanistan.<sup>93</sup> The experience gained during such a long term engagement is invaluable. Due to the number of troops rotating through Afghanistan since 2002, key elements of the Polish armed

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87 “Poles in NATO Missions,” *The Warsaw Voice*.

88 “Poles in NATO Missions,” *The Warsaw Voice*.

89 “Police Military Contingent KFOR,” Ministry of National Defence Republic of Poland, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://en.mon.gov.pl/missions/kfor/polish-military-contingent-kfor-1032478/>.

90 “International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Key Facts and Figures,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization website, last modified June 1, 2014, [http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/media/20140603\\_isaf-placemat-final.pdf](http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/media/20140603_isaf-placemat-final.pdf).

91 “International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Key Facts and Figures,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization website, last modified June 1, 2014, [http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/media/20140603\\_isaf-placemat-final.pdf](http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/media/20140603_isaf-placemat-final.pdf).

92 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *Polish Armed Forces in the ISAF Mission in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*, 2, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/aa11320d-3a36-4d67-9d43-4c14ec746263>.

93 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *Polish Armed Forces in the ISAF Mission in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*, 4–5, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/aa11320d-3a36-4d67-9d43-4c14ec746263>.

forces have credible battlefield experience and a practical understanding of the coalition environment.<sup>94</sup> In addition, the Polish government used the involvement in ISAF to prioritize needed military modernization and as an opportunity to build Allied solidarity.<sup>95</sup>

Poland's noted absence from participation in Operation Unified Protector, the 2011 UN Security Council-approved NATO intervention in Libya, stands in sharp contrast to the nation's historical support for Allied operations. NATO's involvement in the Libyan conflict indicated that all twenty-eight nations of the Alliance supported the operation politically, including the use of the Alliance's infrastructure. Poland was not the only state that abstained from direct participation with air or naval forces. When the mission concluded in October 2011, only half of the NATO countries provided any air or sea power during the campaign while a mere eight of the contributing nations conducted strike operations.<sup>96</sup>

Some have taken an optimistic view on OUP, stressing that the operation introduced a new model of burden sharing for NATO, one in which the United States could play a supporting role while other Alliance members take the lead.<sup>97</sup> Robert Gates, then Secretary of Defense, took the lack of member participation in Libya as a warning. Gates said that many NATO members failed to contribute to OUP not because they chose not to, but because they did not have the capability to wage a modern air campaign.<sup>98</sup> Equally frustrating, according to Gates, were Allies that had the capabilities, but chose not to participate—notably Germany and Poland.<sup>99</sup>

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94 Andrew A. Michta, interviewed by Octavian Manea in "NATO's Post ISAF Challenges and the Dangers of a Hollow Alliance," *Small Wars Journal*, (January 2014), <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/nato%E2%80%99s-post-isaf-challengesand-the-danger-of-a-hollow-alliance>.

95 Michta, "NATO's Post ISAF Challenges."

96 Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 171–172.

97 Ellen Hallams and Benjamin Schreer, "Towards a 'Post-American' Alliance? NATO Burden Sharing after Libya," *International Affairs* 88, no. 2 (2012): 326–327.

98 Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 174.

99 Ibid.

For Poland, the choice of not participating in OUP may have been a result of domestic pressure and strategic judgment. Daria Dylla of the University of Cologne has listed four reasons why Poland may have chosen to refrain from direct action in Libya.<sup>100</sup> First, Libya has no strategic value for Poland. Second, when the conflict began Poland was preparing to take over the rotating EU presidency. By not actively engaging in OUP, Poland maintained a neutral position that would allow it to possibly mediate the conflict between the EU and the Arab world. Third, Poland's military was stretched thin and over-exerted after a decade of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Fourth, domestic opinion weighed heavily in Warsaw. Surveys showed that most Poles believed that intervention in Libya was justified, but 88 percent of respondents opposed deploying Polish military forces in the region. Whether Poland's decision to not participate in Operation Unified Protector will affect its credibility within the Alliance remains to be seen.<sup>101</sup>

### **C. FUTURE OUTLOOK FOR POLAND IN NATO**

Poland has learned valuable lessons since joining NATO. It has seen its national defense strategy complete the transition from a Cold War relic to a modern Western policy in support of the Alliance's strategic objectives. As Poland continues to apply the lessons learned and experiences gained over this period, future Polish National Security Strategies and National Defense Strategies will outline the direction in which the country is headed. Recent political developments on the continent will certainly factor into Poland's defense strategy as it, once again, feels the vulnerability of being a NATO border state.

One particularly interesting development has been Poland's recent increase in defense spending—specifically toward territorial defense capabilities—as the majority of NATO members have been shrinking their defense budgets.<sup>102</sup> This increase in defense

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<sup>100</sup> Daria Dylla, "Poland, Libya, and NATO," *Atlantic Council* (blog), accessed 20 October 2014, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/poland-libya-and-nato>. Another factor may have been an impression on the part of some Poles that French and British leaders were influenced by domestic political considerations.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Andrew A. Michta, "Polish Hard Power: Investing in the Military as Europe Cuts Back," *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*, no. 7 (December 2013), 1–3.



spending is directly tied to the success and growth of Poland's economy, currently ranked ninth among EU states, and the legal requirement to allocate 1.95% of its GDP on the military. This has led to the launch of the most ambitious armed forces modernization plan Poland has ever seen, with Minister of Defense Thomas Siemoniak promising the equivalent of \$30 billion dollars toward the effort through 2022. With this amount of development occurring in a relatively short period of time, the capacity of Poland's acquisition process to handle the new requirements will be tested.<sup>103</sup>

This sudden commitment to increased investments in territorial defense and national capabilities is absolutely warranted, according to Marek Swierczynski, a Polish journalist:

The gas-wars with Ukraine and Belarus, the invasion of Georgia, the air-raids over the Baltic Sea, and Russia's withdrawal from the CFE treaty, which leaves the Kaliningrad-zone beyond control – all that wasn't, in Poland's view, countered by proper NATO response and has thus left Poland in doubt and focused on itself.<sup>104</sup>

Although Poland's security will critically depend on NATO, it seems that the government is returning toward a more traditional view of national security. Poland's 2009 NDS offered hints of a shift in strategic thinking, and the recent events in Ukraine prove that the move toward regional partnerships and an emphasis on territorial defense were warranted.

Poland's experience in the Middle East over the last decade has proved to be transformative, both for its military and its European credibility. As Poland adjusts to a local defensive posture, the lessons learned from combat and the capabilities gained from operating in a joint and combined environment will remain as positive influences within the armed forces for several years. Whether NATO will continue to pursue a global presence or will be forced to retract into Europe due to fiscal and political limitations remains to be seen. Poland, however, will concentrate its effort on homeland defense and

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103 Andrew A. Michta, "Polish Hard Power: Investing in the Military as Europe Cuts Back," *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*, no. 7 (December 2013), 1–3.

104 Marek Swierczynski, "Poland Takes a U-Turn Toward Increased National Security," *Atlantic-Community.org*, September 20, 2013, <http://www.atlantic-community.org/-/poland-takes-a-u-turn-towards-increased-national-security>.

increased regional cooperation. This course will not be pursued to undermine NATO, but rather to strengthen the alliance as a whole.<sup>105</sup>

Within the Poland-NATO relationship, Poland is not the only party to have matured since 1991. NATO has itself been transformed by world events such as the 9/11 attacks, recent fiscal constraints, and current Russian aggression in Ukraine. These events have caused all the Allies to reevaluate their strategic position and priorities, but the Alliance must maintain a shared vision to be effective. NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept identified three core tasks: Collective Defense, Crisis Management, and Cooperative Security.<sup>106</sup> It is on the implementation of these tasks that NATO's future cohesion and success hinge. Yost summarizes the struggle as follows:

The risk of the Alliance's overextension has become obvious. The fatigue with Afghanistan has become palpable, the budget crunch has constrained resources for operations and force modernization, and the consensus on how to address longstanding challenges (such as relations with Russia) and emerging issues (such as energy security) has become fragile.<sup>107</sup>

It would be wrong to differentiate between the future security concerns of Poland and those of NATO as a whole. Clear delineations between a threat to Poland, Central and Eastern Europe, and the entire Alliance cannot be made, and those who try to make such distinctions risk not only alienating key Allies, but also placing the whole organization in jeopardy.

## **D. CONCLUSION**

Poland has completed its journey from Warsaw Pact adversary to influential NATO member. Through civil-military restructuring and economic reform, Poland has earned a prominent seat at the table of the most significant collective defense

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<sup>105</sup> Andrew A. Michta, interviewed by Octavian Manea in "NATO's Post ISAF Challenges and the Dangers of a Hollow Alliance," *Small Wars Journal*, (Jan 2014), <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/nato%E2%80%99s-post-isaf-challengesand-the-danger-of-a-hollow-alliance>.

<sup>106</sup> North Atlantic Council, "Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," November 19, 2010, par. 4, quoted in David S. Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2014), 13.

<sup>107</sup> Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 376.

organization in the world. By gradually playing an increased role in NATO operations, Poland has modernized its armed forces and established credibility with its Allies and other nations. As the security environment around the world continues to change, Poland will find itself on a new journey, this time helping to lead NATO through future challenges. The Alliance will require bold leadership to reassure the existing Allies of NATO's commitment to collective defense while, at the same time, shaping a strategy to expand the influence of democracy and security.

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### III. POLAND'S INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE EU'S COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

The European Union is an ongoing and developing project that traces its origins back from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) of 1951. Although originally envisioned as an economic and political entity, the European Union's impact on stability within and among its member states proves that the organization plays at least an indirect role in ensuring security throughout the region.<sup>108</sup> In this light the EU has been an attractive beacon for Poland, even throughout the Cold War. During communist rule and in the years immediately following, the EU's emphasis on economic development offered Poland a less controversial avenue to cooperate with the West.<sup>109</sup> According to Marcin Zaborowski, director of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, "In Poland, an overwhelming sense of 'belonging to Europe' prevailed among the population throughout the postwar period."<sup>110</sup> Poland quickly viewed the EU as a vital key to rejoining Europe and minimizing dependence on Russia.

By the late 1990s the European Union's role evolved into an institution with real ambitions in the fields of security and defense, currently known as the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). Poland, initially pursuing EU membership as "a secure economic and political anchor for the post-1989 changes," according to Krzysztof Bobinski, now found itself potentially under the umbrella of—and participating in—another security institution.<sup>111</sup> How would Poland react to this new EU mission? Would Poland view CSDP as another opportunity to further integrate into Western institutions, while at the same time using this new EU interest in security and defense to bolster its

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<sup>108</sup> Throughout this thesis the term European Union (EU) may be used in lieu of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC), and the European Communities (EC) in order to avoid confusion.

<sup>109</sup> Marcin Zaborowski, *Germany, Poland and Europe: Conflict, co-operation and Europeanisation* (Manchester: Manchester Press, 2004), 108.

<sup>110</sup> Zaborowski, *Germany, Poland and Europe*, 108.

<sup>111</sup> Krzysztof Bobinski, "From Poland and Eastern Europe," in *European Foreign Policies: Does Europe Still Matter?*, ed. Ronald Tiersky and John Van Oudenaren (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010) 281.

own military capability? This chapter examines Poland's role in the European Union, with particular attention to Poland's increased involvement in the Common Security and Defense Policy arena. The chapter begins with a brief history of the EU and the major developments leading to the creation of CSDP. This chapter then focuses on Poland's road to accession, highlighting the political hurdles the nation had to overcome prior to becoming an EU member state. The chapter also gives specific attention to Poland's role in CSDP and particular missions to which Poland has contributed. Finally, an assessment of the future outlook for Poland and the EU is provided.

#### **A. POLAND'S ACCESSION INTO THE EU**

According to the 1957 Treaty of Rome, all countries within Europe are eligible to join the EU. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Poland was eager to secure a lifeline around any institution that would prevent the nation from slipping eastward, both economically and politically.<sup>112</sup> In order to understand Poland's desire to become a member of the EU, one must briefly recount the history and major milestones of this evolving European organization.

The beginning of the EU can be traced back to 1951 with the establishment of the ECSC.<sup>113</sup> The idea for such a community stemmed from the Schuman declaration, referring to then French foreign minister, Robert Schuman, and his vision of a new form of political cooperation throughout Europe. Some of the goals of this economic union also had clear political implications—for example, to protect against future German aggression by controlling collectively the resources required to wage war: coal and steel. The ECSC was comprised of France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, and West Germany. The establishment of the ECSC as a supranational organization demonstrated the willingness of these countries to forgo certain aspects of national sovereignty in order to maintain peace.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Bobinski, "Poland and Eastern Europe," 264–265.

<sup>113</sup> "A Peaceful Europe – The Beginnings of Cooperation," European Union, Europa.eu, accessed September 13, 2014, [http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1945-1959/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1945-1959/index_en.htm).

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

In 1950–1954, France also championed the creation of a supranational European Defense Community (EDC); however, this proposal ultimately failed.<sup>115</sup> As it turns out, the European nations (including France) were not ready to relinquish national control over security and defense matters. The failure of the EDC proposal led to the establishment of the Western European Union (WEU) in 1954. The WEU was based on a modified version of the Treaty of Brussels signed in 1948 and acted as an intergovernmental security organization for the six countries within the ECSC, plus Great Britain. Due to the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949, the WEU had little strategic impact for the first 30 years of its existence, but it did manage to act as a sounding board for European countries on foreign policy issues and was free from the influence of the United States.<sup>116</sup>

In 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed by the same six countries that formed the ECSC, establishing the European Economic Communities (EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). These three organizations would be joined together by the Merger Treaty of 1967 and officially come to be known as the European Communities (EC).<sup>117</sup>

The 1970s and 1980s showed little development along the common security and defense front for Europe. There were political changes, however, taking place throughout the continent; and with the Cold War coming to an end, Europe's Trans-Atlantic relationship would need to be redefined. Among the many consequences of the Soviet Union's collapse, Jolyon Howorth tells us, was the "lessening strategic importance of Europe for the USA."<sup>118</sup> The fear of a diverging relationship between the United States and Europe led to the revitalization of the WEU and a renewed urgency to find a coordinated position on foreign policy.<sup>119</sup>

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115 "A Peaceful Europe – The Beginnings of Cooperation," European Union, Europa.eu.

116 Ibid.

117 A Period of Economic Growth," European Union, Europa.eu, accessed November 24, 2013, [http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1960-1969/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1960-1969/index_en.htm).

118 Jolyon Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 52.

119 Ibid., 35–36.

The Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992 by 12 member states, officially changed the name of the European Communities to the European Union and instituted a three pillar system comprised of European Community, Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and Justice and Home Affairs. As the second pillar, the objective of CFSP was to establish the EU on the international foreign policy scene.<sup>120</sup> The decade of the 1990s proved that the development of CFSP within the EU was a necessary step, but it would also highlight limitations. For example, the fact that the EU could not successfully resolve the Balkan conflict without outside assistance pinpointed a key security problem.<sup>121</sup>

Also in 1992, the WEU, although still separate from the EU at this time, adopted the Petersberg tasks. Section II Paragraph 4 of the Petersberg Declaration states:

Apart from contributing to the common defence in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty respectively, military units of WEU member States, acting under the authority of WEU, could be employed for:

- humanitarian and rescue tasks;
- peacekeeping tasks;
- tasks of combat forces in crisis management including peacemaking<sup>122</sup>

Lessons learned from the early 1990s led to the EU's 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam which, among other things, introduced considerable changes in the field of CFSP, including the incorporation of the Petersberg tasks into the new treaty.<sup>123</sup> Possibly the most important advancement for CFSP was the creation of a new position, High Representative for EU Foreign Policy. This position provided the outside world with a name and face responsible for EU foreign policy.<sup>124</sup>

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120 Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, 63.

121 Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, 55.

122 Western European Union, *Petersberg Declaration*, 19 June 1992 (Bonn) 6.

123 Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, 151.

124 Ibid., 65.



Directly on the heels of the Amsterdam Treaty came a historic Anglo-French summit in St. Malo in December 1998. At this summit, Great Britain changed its position on European security and defense policies. The British contended that a strong Europe, with the ability to act autonomously, would, rather than threaten NATO, actually strengthen Trans-Atlantic relations. In the words of the St. Malo Declaration, “the [European] Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises.”<sup>125</sup> The declaration by Great Britain and France sparked a renewed emphasis on security institution building within the EU.<sup>126</sup>

The summit also resulted in the Helsinki Headline Goals. This initiative was adopted by the European Council a year after the St. Malo declaration and laid out a military capability target, requiring the EU to deploy and sustain a corps-size unit able to conduct military operations in support of the Petersberg tasks.<sup>127</sup> The achievement of the St. Malo declaration and the Helsinki Headline Goals were reaffirmed in the Treaty of Nice in 2003. While the Treaty of Nice allowed for the eastern expansion of the EU, which Poland had long been waiting for, it also managed to solidify some of the progress in CFSP. Notably, the Treaty of Nice authorized the EU to take responsibility for particular tasks once accomplished by the WEU.<sup>128</sup>

The Lisbon Treaty, also known as the Reform Treaty, was signed in 2007 and entered into force in 2009. This treaty also had broad implications throughout the EU, dissolving the three pillar structure, updating the role of the High Representative, and formalizing the term CSDP.

The history of the European Union shows that the seeds of collaborative European security and defense have potential to grow. The accession of Poland and other former Soviet satellites in 2004 not only added drama to these events, but also magnified the implications of a new regional security institution.

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<sup>125</sup> Franco-British Summit, *Joint Declaration on European Defense*, 4 December 1998 (Saint-Malo).

<sup>126</sup> Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, 62–63.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 67

Poland's decision to pursue EU membership was as much a return to its cultural roots as it was a longing for improved economic conditions and democratic policies. Poland's ties to a European identity reach back to the year 966 when Prince Mieszko, regarded as Poland's first ruler, decided to be baptized in Rome, sealing a bond with Western Christendom.<sup>129</sup> Poland's long history of Western tradition, however, did not guarantee a smooth transition into the EU. According to Zaborowski, "Poland proved to be the most difficult of the accession countries."<sup>130</sup>

The EU, being an economic and political organization, was in a prime position to quickly react to the changing political landscape of 1989. Evidence of this can be seen in the speedy establishment of Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies, an economic recovery program known as PHARE. This program, originally established to support Poland and Hungary through their post-communist transitions, would eventually develop into the EU's financial instrument to help all countries seeking EU membership.<sup>131</sup>

Poland's first milestone toward integrating with the EU occurred in December 1991 with the signing of the European Agreements. While not actually addressing the issue of enlargement, these agreements did create an official association between the EU and Poland. According to an EU press release, the agreements "set out the framework for political dialogue and the promotion of the expansion of trade and economic relations with a view to contributing to the economic development and prosperity of the signatories."<sup>132</sup>

These early programs and agreements set the stage for the EU member states to reach a consensus on enlargement. The eastern expansion of the EU became official policy during the 1993 Copenhagen summit. At this summit, the EU states agreed on

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<sup>129</sup> Zaborowski, *Germany, Poland and Europe*, 124.

<sup>130</sup> Zaborowski, *Germany, Poland and Europe*, 134.

<sup>131</sup> PHARE programme, Europa, [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/enlargement/2004\\_and\\_2007\\_enlargement/e50004\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/enlargement/2004_and_2007_enlargement/e50004_en.htm), accessed September 14, 2014.

<sup>132</sup> European Commission, Memo/94/7 "Europe Agreements with Poland and Hungary –entry into force 1 February 1994," [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-94-7\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-94-7_en.htm), accessed September 14, 2014.

specific guidelines, known as the Copenhagen criteria, for future EU membership. An invitation was extended to all the countries that already had European Agreements established with the EU. John Van Oudenaren summarizes the Copenhagen criteria as “economic viability and the establishment of democratic institutions and free market economic systems.”<sup>133</sup> The attainment of these terms would become a major priority for Poland over the next ten years.<sup>134</sup>

While the Copenhagen summit proved that the EU had the political will to make enlargement a reality, “it was clear,” according to Zaborowski, “that the accession countries would struggle to meet all the legal and technical requirements that needed to be adopted prior to the opening of actual negotiations.”<sup>135</sup> As a result, by 1994 the EU began to establish a structural relationship with the prospective new members. This arrangement allowed the Central and Eastern European nations to join in a limited number of internal EU meetings and provided access to legal and technical assistance programs for the candidate countries.<sup>136</sup>

By 1998 Poland had sufficiently met the Copenhagen criteria and was invited to begin official membership negotiations. This marked a transition for Poland in its course to join the EU. What was originally a matter of political courtship now became a more technocratic process that would prove extremely difficult to conclude for Poland, the largest and strategically most significant nation among the accession states.<sup>137</sup>

The negotiations required Poland to find a common position among the member states on 31 different topics. According to the EU website:

The negotiations determine the conditions under which each applicant country will join the European Union. On joining the Union, applicants are expected to accept the “*acquis*,” i.e., the detailed laws and rules

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133 John Van Oudenaren, “The European Union as a Foreign Policy Actor,” in *European Foreign Policies: Does Europe Still Matter?*, ed. Ronald Tiersky and John Van Oudenaren (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010) 24.

134 Oudenaren, “The European Union,” 24.

135 Zaborowski, *Germany, Poland and Europe*, 110.

136 Ibid.

137 Ibid., 134.

adopted on the basis of the EU's founding treaties, mainly the treaties of Rome, Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice. The negotiations focus on the terms under which the applicants will adopt, implement and enforce the *acquis*, and, notably, the granting of possible transitional arrangements which must be limited in scope and duration. Under similar arrangements in previous accession negotiations, new Member States have been able to phase in their compliance with certain laws and rules by a date agreed during the negotiations.<sup>138</sup>

The negotiation process required the direct involvement of all major ministries within the Polish government. In Zaborowski's words, "Overall, negotiations led to a greater engagement of more domestic actors attempting to influence national positions and defend their particular interests in the process."<sup>139</sup> The result was a domestication of the negotiations which brought to light politically charged questions about many of the 31 topics up for negotiation. Foremost among the problems were issues concerning migrant workers and agricultural subsidies.<sup>140</sup>

The years between 1998 and 2004 proved to be a challenging period for Poland and the EU. As Polish domestic politics continued to mature and the EU acknowledged that enlargement without Poland was unreasonable, the two entities found enough common ground to formalize their relationship and complete Poland's latest quest for Europeanization. On 16 April 2003 the Accession Treaty was signed by EU member states and representatives of the ten new European Union members, Poland among them. The treaty came into effect on 1 May 2004, marking the official date when Poland became an EU member.

## **B. POLAND'S ROLE IN CSDP**

Poland's road to European Union membership was longer than most Poles had hoped and was fraught with substantial political potholes. This turbulent journey is also mirrored in Poland's participation in the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy. This section explains how Poland's role within CSDP has evolved, emphasizing Poland's

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<sup>138</sup> Negotiations, Europa, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/enlargement\\_process/future\\_prospects/negotiations/eu10\\_bulgaria\\_romania/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/enlargement_process/future_prospects/negotiations/eu10_bulgaria_romania/index_en.htm), accessed on September 16, 2014.

<sup>139</sup> Zaborowski, *Germany, Poland and Europe*, 135.

<sup>140</sup> Zaborowski, *Germany, Poland and Europe*, 135.

transition from a staunch NATO Atlanticist country to a nation with a more balanced view of CSDP pragmatism. This section will also examine in some detail Poland's role in CSDP missions, showing Poland's increased involvement in the EU as a security institution.

After the events of World War II, from September 1939 to the end, including Poland's feeling of being deserted and betrayed at Yalta, it is no wonder that the primary focus of Poland's strategic culture is maintaining Polish independence. This explains why the country is skeptical of the capacity of weak multilateral institutions to provide security.<sup>141</sup> As a result, Poland's security strategy initially favored—and continues to call for—a strong U.S. bilateral relationship and the decisive support of NATO. Poland gained NATO membership in 1999, five years before its EU membership, and Warsaw would be reluctant to do anything to undermine NATO's promise of collective defense. Olaf Osica, a political analyst from the Natolin European Center, writes, "Polish politicians believed that the best place to develop European capabilities in defence policy was within NATO."<sup>142</sup>

Poland's preference for credible U.S. security guarantees over any kind of newly formed EU security policy is not surprising. In explaining Poland's decision to participate in the United States-led coalition in the 2003 Iraq War, Bobinski wrote, "In a nutshell, a country like Poland went into Iraq because it felt that by fighting in Baghdad, it was taking out an insurance policy for any future threat to Bialystok on its eastern border."<sup>143</sup> By the time Poland officially joined the EU in 2004 this Atlanticist attitude prejudiced its support for CSDP. Poland was not willing to jeopardize its U.S. and NATO pledges for an unproven EU security initiative.

Recently, Poland's mindset has shifted toward a more balanced approach to CSDP. Howorth holds that this is a "consequence of two major developments: growing

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141 Laura Chappell, "Differing Member State Approaches to the Development of the EU Battlegroup Concept: Implications for CSDP," *European Security* 18, no. 4 (December 2009): 421.

142 Olaf Osica, "In Search of a New Role: Poland in Euro-Atlantic Relations," in *Poland: A New Power in Trans-Atlantic Security*, ed. Marcin Zaborowski and David H. Dunn (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003), 33.

143 Bobinski, "Poland and Eastern Europe," 274.

disillusionment with the U.S. record in Iraq; and the consequences of Polish membership in the EU.”<sup>144</sup> Zaborowski supports this first point by stating, “The Iraq crisis was the first case when Poland experienced the perils of American leadership and hegemony.”<sup>145</sup> In a 2004 press conference, Polish President Kwasniewski voiced his disapproval regarding the chief rationale for the US-led intervention when he declared that “Poland was misled” by the United States concerning the issue of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.<sup>146</sup>

Howorth’s second judgment—that Poland’s growing acceptance of CSDP is due to Poland’s increasingly involved membership within the EU—also has merit. Howorth points out that there has “been a growing sense that Warsaw can play a genuinely leading role among major European decision-makers.”<sup>147</sup> There is a candid belief that Poland can be more influential in the EU than in NATO. Chappell explains, “For the Poles, the importance of being able to participate in decisions affecting their interests in security matters means that Polish policy-makers are looking to play a key role in CSDP.”<sup>148</sup> Howorth also asserts that “Warsaw’s desired policy of extending the security hand of friendship to its Eastern neighbors will be more easily—and probably more successfully—implemented via ESDP than via NATO.”<sup>149</sup> Poland’s current view on security institutions has clearly evolved into a pragmatic belief that benefits can be derived from a strong NATO policy and a realistic CSDP capability, plus a close relationship with the United States. In April 2008, Bogdan Klich, then the defense minister of Poland, said, “It is necessary to host on our territory institutions either from the alliance, the EU or the United States. These are the three pillars of our security.”<sup>150</sup>

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144 Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, 149.

145 Marcin Zaborowski, *From American Protégé to Constructive European: Polish Security Policy in the Twenty-First Century*, European Institute for Security Studies, 2004.

146 President Kwasniewski quoted in Marcin Zaborowski, *From American Protégé to Constructive European: Polish Security Policy in the Twenty-First Century*, European Institute for Security Studies, 2004.

147 Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, 149.

148 Chappell, “Differing Member State Approaches,” 432.

149 Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, 149.

150 Bogdan Klich quoted in David S. Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2014), 376.

What evidence is there that Poland's balanced security strategy has been institutionalized throughout its Defense Ministry? For one thing, Poland's latest National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy articulate the change. The 2007 NSS lists the EU as one of the organizations fundamental to Poland's national security.<sup>151</sup> The 2009 NDS specifically mentions that Poland's security is enhanced by the EU and that the European Union is one of Poland's main reference points in foreign and defense policy.<sup>152</sup>

More conclusive evidence of Poland's new found acceptance of CSDP can be seen in the specific EU missions that the country has contributed to and supported. Poland's first EU operation was CONCORDIA, conducted in Macedonia. The task lasted from 31 March 2003 to 15 December 2003 with the goal of stabilizing the area in order to allow for a peaceful and democratic country to emerge.<sup>153</sup>

Since then Poland has participated in six unique EU missions. These operations were not limited to Europe. Polish troops have been deployed as far south as the Democratic Republic of Congo and as far east as Georgia. The types of missions have also varied. In Macedonia, Poland participated in military operations and police missions. In Georgia, the Polish troops were sent in support of a rule of law mission.<sup>154</sup>

Currently, Poland is engaged in 15 ongoing EU missions spanning a large area of the globe and fulfilling specialized needs.<sup>155</sup> The involvement of the European Union's CSDP in such missions marks a new development for the EU. For Poland, CSDP provides another option in the realm of security and defense. Rather than viewing NATO

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151 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2007), 4, <http://www.defesa.gov.pl/projektyweb/livrobranco/arquivos/pdf/Pol%20c3%b4nia%202007.pdf>.

152 The Ministry of the National Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw, 2009), 5–6, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=156791>.

153 CONCORDIA/FYROM, Europa, [http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/concordia/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/concordia/index_en.htm), accessed on September 25, 2014.

154 EU and NATO Operations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland, [http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign\\_policy/security\\_policy/eu\\_nato\\_operations/](http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign_policy/security_policy/eu_nato_operations/), accessed on September 25, 2014.

155 EU and NATO Operations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland, [http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign\\_policy/security\\_policy/eu\\_nato\\_operations/](http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign_policy/security_policy/eu_nato_operations/), accessed on September 25, 2014.

and CSDP as two separate “all or nothing” choices, Warsaw recognizes that increased options allow for flexibility of response.

### **C. FUTURE OUTLOOK FOR POLAND IN THE EU**

Poland has slowly embraced the European Union as a legitimate security institution capable of certain tasks under the aegis of the CSDP. This does not mean, however, that the road ahead for Poland and the EU is free of obstacles. The idea of CSDP playing a larger role within the EU is not universally accepted among the EU members. This section reviews the limitations CSDP faces within the EU before focusing on some of the perceived advantages of this new security and defense policy. This section concludes with an outlook on Poland’s future role within CSDP.

The two ominous limitations to an effective CSDP in the near future are the differences of national strategic culture found among the 28 EU member states and the fiscal constraints on supporting yet another security institution. If it is assumed that the European Union will need to corral 28 national strategic cultures into a single vision in order to provide an effective security and defense policy, then CSDP may have a frustrating future. According to Geoffrey Edwards, “National discourses retain a legitimacy that European multilateralism has difficulty in challenging.”<sup>156</sup> Each unique national strategic culture now becomes an independent variable that has the potential to drastically change in relation to external influences and that will for the foreseeable future carry more relevance than the common goal of a multinational union. Expansion of the EU will only complicate this situation.<sup>157</sup> This was evident when the newly admitted Central and Eastern European states brought their own foreign policy priorities to the table. With a focus on territorial defense and a high level of concern about Russian policies, countries such as Poland and the Baltic states are skeptical of CSDP capabilities and tend to trust bilateral agreements with the United States over the burgeoning, but

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<sup>156</sup> Geoffrey Edwards, “Is There a Security Culture in the Enlarged European Union?,” *The International Spectator* 3, (2006): 18.

<sup>157</sup> Christoph O. Meyer, “Theorising European Strategic Culture: Between Convergence and the Persistence of National Diversity,” Center for European Policy Studies, CEPS Working Document 204, (June 2004), <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mec01/mec01.pdf>.



limited EU security apparatus.<sup>158</sup> Christoph Meyer explains, “We cannot assume that transnational homogeneity is the natural state of affairs in a European Union consisting of member states with sometimes long and diverse historical experiences.”<sup>159</sup>

National budgets pose a second, similarly obstructive, limitation to the future of CSDP authority. For the EU to have a recognized and respected foreign policy program, with a credible defense arm, the rhetoric will need to be supported by financial commitments from each country. Currently there is a disconnect between the EU’s ambition to support the Helsinki Headline Goals and the reduced defense expenditures throughout most of its member states.<sup>160</sup> The military budgets of countries within the EU range from 43 billion euros for Great Britain to 44 million euros for Malta.<sup>161</sup> This disparity highlights the differences in resources of the EU states, but it may also speak to a difference in priorities when it comes to defense expenditures. If the budgets across Europe diminish, so too may the scope and relevance of the EU’s CSDP missions. Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards hold, “The EU’s efforts are bound to be limited in scope, whatever the aspirations of some in Europe, even if only by the constant pressures on defense budgets.”<sup>162</sup>

The challenges facing the continued development of CSDP are formidable. After taking account of national differences, divergent foreign policy objectives, and differing resources in defense budgets, an effective EU security and defense policy may seem like a distant dream. However, despite the complications mentioned above, CSDP does have a fair share of advantages.

Many benefits of CSDP stem from the fact that it is not NATO, meaning that CSDP is not heavily influenced by U.S. concerns, can prioritize European interests, and

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158 Edwards, “Is There a Security Culture,” 19–20.

159 Meyer, *Quest for a European Strategic Culture*, 29.

160 Edwards, “Is There a Security Culture,” 8.

161 European Defence Agency, National Defence Data 2012, accessed on 17 October 2014, <http://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/finance-documents/national-defence-data-2012.pdf>.

162 Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards, “Beyond the EU/NATO Dichotomy: The Beginnings of a European Strategic Culture,” *International Affairs* 77, no. 3 (2001), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-2346.00208/abstract>

is not limited to “hard power” military solutions. As a unique security institution, with a full range of civilian and military capabilities, CSDP takes on a role that neither NATO nor any individual European nation could adequately fill alone. For example, EU enlargement may be seen by Russia as much less threatening than NATO enlargement. In a similar manner, a CSDP mission might contain less political baggage—at least in some circumstances—than direct NATO involvement. With the focus of the United States drifting away from Europe to the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific since the end of the Cold War, CSDP provides a security alternative for its EU members.<sup>163</sup> If it were backed up by military capability investments, this independent European security capacity would not only strengthen the EU; it would strengthen NATO as well by indicating to the United States that Europe is taking its responsibility for security seriously. CSDP has also shown itself to be an extremely flexible tool, as seen in the variety of missions that the EU has engaged in. When Central and Eastern European countries began looking west after the Cold War, Zaborowski observes, “The most immediate security problems of the region...were to do with market access and ‘soft’ security issues.”<sup>164</sup> The participating EU states have acted under CSDP auspices to deal with soft security issues, gaining experience in everything from police actions to migration and humanitarian relief. It is the EU’s ability and willingness to deal with these softer issues that set it apart from other security institutions.

So what future role will Poland play in CSDP? Zaborowski reminds us that, “Post-Cold War Polish foreign policy has consistently aimed to maintain a balance between its Atlantic and European dimensions.”<sup>165</sup> But much has changed over the last 25 years. Poland will no doubt continue to court American security guarantees. However, as Poland’s influence increases within the European continent, Poland’s loyalty may become more localized. Zaborowski predicts, “Poland’s Atlanticism is likely to recede whilst its sense of self-identification with the European mainstream is likely to grow.”<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, 52.

<sup>164</sup> Zaborowski, *Germany, Poland and Europe*, 105.

<sup>165</sup> Zaborowski, *From American Protégé to Constructive European*, 25.

<sup>166</sup> Zaborowski, *From American Protégé to Constructive European*, 25.

If Poland concludes that its opinions carry more weight within the EU than NATO, it would be logical for Poland to favor more CSDP relevance and involvement in the future. As Poland continues to be one of the few European countries willing to increase their defense budgets, their prominence among EU nations will continue to rise.<sup>167</sup> Additionally, Russia's recent aggressive actions in Ukraine have proven that Poland's suspicious, though often politically incorrect, views of Moscow are accurate. As recently as 2010 Bobinski wrote, "Poland's influence within the EU and its ability to secure its interest in internal EU matters is limited by a confrontational approach on Russia that tends to push the country to the margins of EU policymaking."<sup>168</sup> The Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014 showed that the Polish assessment of Russia was right on point. This wake-up call may force the EU to prioritize its support for Central and Eastern Europe, a policy in which Poland will undoubtedly play a key role.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Poland's road to EU membership was not easy, but the struggles required for acceptance into the European Union proved that Poland was committed to returning to Europe. Bobinski says, "If there was anything that ensured the Eastern Europeans' smooth transition from the communist regime, it was the conditionality that the Western institutions imposed as the price for membership."<sup>169</sup> The pursuit of EU membership forced Warsaw to evolve on many fronts, including security and defense. Since 2004 Poland's role has grown alongside CSDP. Poland and the EU have created a new identity for themselves and are growing more assertive as their experience and confidence increase.

Many questions still need answering. Will the EU and NATO learn to efficiently co-exist? Will Russia feel threatened by this new EU role? How will this affect American relations with the EU? Will Poland ever favor an EU guarantee over one provided by NATO or the United States?

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<sup>167</sup> Andrew A. Michta, "Polish Hard Power: Investing in the Military as Europe Cuts Back," *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*, no. 7 (December 2013), 1.

<sup>168</sup> Bobinski, "Poland and Eastern Europe," 279.

<sup>169</sup> Bobinski, "Poland and Eastern Europe," 267.

Poland's second decade of EU membership and CSDP involvement may provide answers to the questions above. It is certain that peace throughout Europe cannot be taken for granted. A strong and secure Europe is a keystone to worldwide stability. As Russia threatens to disrupt this stability, politicians will need a variety of options to counter this aggression. The EU originally provided Poland with an option to rejoin the Western world. Now CSDP provides Poland with yet another option to secure its national interests.

## IV. THE WEIMAR TRIANGLE

As the Cold War came to an end, the world was forced to quickly grapple with the inevitable political implications. One of the glaring consequences that had to be addressed was the uncertain fate of Central and Eastern Europe. In a rare show of far-sighted and proactive governance, France and Germany reached out to Poland to propose an informal structure of cooperation known as the Weimar Triangle. In this case, the term triangle may seem more geometrically correct than diplomatically accurate if it implies an equal relationship linking three actors, where any two sides can have a dramatic effect on the third.<sup>170</sup> In reality, the choice of words was more a symbolic gesture toward Poland than a description of reality. Nevertheless, France and Germany decided that it was imperative to help reunite Poland with modern Europe. The forum has been in existence since 1991, yet it is still not very well known in Europe. Is the scarcity of headlines and news stories regarding the Weimar Triangle evidence of its ineffectiveness? Or is this unique intra-regional relationship quietly reintegrating Poland into the West?

This chapter analyzes the loose and informal coalition of France, Germany, and Poland known as the Weimar Triangle. The chapter also shows that the Weimar Triangle was able to achieve its initial goal of reintroducing Poland to Western Europe and, more importantly, that it has laid the foundation for becoming a driving force behind European politics today. Specifically, this chapter recounts historical milestones of the Weimar Triangle, identifies the different areas of cooperation within this trilateral network, and provides a realistic outlook on its future. In doing so, the potential for a new role for the Weimar Triangle emerges. In this new role all three nations can benefit from the partnership, and a bridge from an old Europe to a new Europe can be constructed.

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<sup>170</sup> Wolfram Vogel, "The-Franco-German-Polish Weimar Triangle: A Strategic Instrument of Franco-German Relations," in *A History of Franco-German Relations in Europe: From "Hereditary Enemies" to Partners*, ed. Carine Germond and Henning Turk (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 261.

## A. HISTORY OF THE WEIMAR TRIANGLE

In order to understand the extent to which the Weimar Triangle is capable of providing reputable and decisive leadership on the European continent, it is critical to understand the context in which it was formed. The Weimar Triangle was ushered into existence on 29 August 1991. On this day, the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, and Poland came together in the town of Weimar, Germany, to officially proclaim a reconciliation between three countries with long and sometimes checkered histories. Although the Franco-German relationship has been stable since the 1963 Treaty of Friendship, commonly known as the Elysée Treaty, it was not until the end of the Cold War that a similar agreement could be extended toward Poland. The three Foreign Ministers—Roland Dumas of France, Hans-Dietrich Genscher of Germany, and Krzysztof Skubiszewski of Poland—understood the importance of integrating Poland into the European community and decided to champion the creation of this forum of consultation.<sup>171</sup>

The city of Weimar and the date of inception of the Weimar Triangle are both representative of the Weimar Triangle ambitions. Weimar is a beautiful city located in the federal state of Thuringia. It is also the birthplace of the late Weimar Republic, which happens to be the name of Germany's first, albeit unsuccessful, attempt at democracy. This attempt to establish an enduring democratic regime began with the convening of a constitutional assembly at Weimar in 1919. The dates of the initial Weimar Triangle meeting were 28–29 August 1991. Here is evidence of further symbolism. A renowned German poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, was born in Weimar on 28 August 1749. The importance of this shared date is affirmed by the cultural cooperation endorsed among the Weimar Triangle countries.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> “The Weimar Triangle,” Federal Foreign Office, last updated December 13, 2013, [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Europa/DeutschlandInEuropa/BilateraleBeziehungen/WeimarerDreieck\\_node.html](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Europa/DeutschlandInEuropa/BilateraleBeziehungen/WeimarerDreieck_node.html)

<sup>172</sup> Mihai Sebe, “The Weimar Triangle – Between a moderate regional success and an uncertain future. Where Does It Come From? What Is It? Where Is It Going?,” *SSRN Working Paper Series* (02), (February 2011): 4–5, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1095322356?accountid=12702>.

It was in this picturesque setting on this historic date that France, Germany, and Poland formalized an arrangement with a specific goal in mind, mentoring Poland's fledgling government in the ways of Western Europe. Specifically, France and Germany hoped to integrate Poland into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and eventually into the European Union (EU). In a 2011 speech during a Weimar Triangle award presentation, German Minister of State Cornelia Pieper said, "It was the declared goal of Germany and France, long viewed as the 'motors of European Integration', to incorporate the young democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, and in particular Poland, into Euro-Atlantic structures. It is clear today that this integration has been entirely successful."<sup>173</sup>

The first part of the initial goal was realized in 1999 when Poland was able to join NATO. In 2004, in accordance with the Treaty of Accession of 2003, Poland was granted membership in the EU along with nine other countries. This milestone marked the achievement of the original Weimar Triangle goal.

The partnership, however, did not dissolve, rather it aimed to redefine its purpose. According to Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, "In the expanded EU, the Weimar Triangle serves as a forum for consultations and developing common positions on key European policy issues."<sup>174</sup>

Critics have claimed that the Weimar Triangle has produced minimal results, particularly when it comes to resolving current European concerns, and that Poland would have likely joined NATO and the EU without any help from the Triangle.<sup>175</sup> On the other hand, if it is recalled that this trio was never intended to be an institutionalized union, but rather a venue for the exchange of dialogue, a more positive portrayal of the partnership comes into view.<sup>176</sup> As organizations such as NATO and the EU continue to expand their mandates and their membership, the role of the Weimar Triangle has the

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<sup>173</sup> Cornelia Pieper, "Culture in the Weimar Triangle: The Status Quo and Ways Ahead," Speech of Minister of State delivered on August 29, 2011.

<sup>174</sup> "Weimar Triangle," Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland, accessed January 12, 2014, [http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign\\_policy/europe/wweimar\\_triangle1/?printMode=true](http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign_policy/europe/wweimar_triangle1/?printMode=true).

<sup>175</sup> Vogel, "Franco-German-Polish Weimar Triangle," 268.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

potential to grow. It will be the responsibility of France, Germany, and Poland to define this new role and ensure its relevance. Today, the goals of the Weimar Triangle are as much geared toward cultural exchange and support as they are toward political trust and cooperation.<sup>177</sup>

One encouraging sign of the continued importance of the Weimar Triangle is the number of key leadership engagements since its inception. The Foreign Ministers of the three countries have met twenty times over the last two decades. Their last meeting was held in Warsaw, Poland, on 23 June 2012. More importantly, the heads of state or government of the trilateral forum have convened eight times, most recently on 7 February 2011 in Warsaw. During this engagement Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel discussed such issues as the EU economic crisis, the then-upcoming Polish presidency within the EU (July-December 2011), safety and defense policy, and cooperation among scientific institutions.<sup>178</sup> Aside from the importance of the topics discussed, it is critical to note that this was the first time the three heads of state or government assembled in over four years. The 2011 summit was a key step toward reinvigorating the Weimar Triangle.

Despite the numerous state-sponsored events and meetings held by the tri-partite association, several glaring examples of missed political opportunities can be identified. Undoubtedly, the Weimar Triangle has failed to meet its full potential in recent years. In 2003, a year before Poland's accession into the EU, the leaders of the Weimar Triangle nations congregated in Wroclaw, Poland, and proclaimed support for increased trilateral cooperation, asserting that the Weimar Triangle would be vital in providing leadership and energy to an expanding European Union.<sup>179</sup> Rather than using the momentum of Poland's entry into the European Union to facilitate conflict resolution during a time

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177 "Weimar Triangle," Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland.

178 "The Weimar Triangle Summit," The Official website of the President of the republic of Poland, accessed February 2, 2014, <http://www.president.pl/en/news/news/art,177,the-weimar-triangle-summit.html>.

179 Kai-Olaf Lang and Daniela Schwarzer, "Consolidating the Weimar Triangle: European Policy Functions of German-Polish-French Co-operation," *German Institute for International and Security Affairs* (2011): 2, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/919958574?accountid=12702>.



when Europe was looking for a strong voice, however, the three nations entered into a period of disagreement marked by exclusionary tactics.

The first major point of contention came over the 2003 United States-led invasion of Iraq. Instead of attempting to mediate a common solution across Europe, France and Germany established their own nationalistic positions. As an additional affront to Poland, France and Germany looked to Russia for a shared view on the situation. This brought back dreadful memories of the 1930s to the halls of Warsaw. That same year, Franco-German pressure was applied to Poland in regard to signing the European Constitutional Treaty. Although the treaty never came into effect, the behavior of France and Germany during this time confirmed that Poland's position within the trilateral partnership was that of an unequal participant.<sup>180</sup>

The forum has also failed to produce a consensus or play a key role regarding critical EU issues during the last several years. One such notable example was the double majority debate. This debate centered on the issue of reforming the rules of European Council voting. In short, the proposal was that the Council could pass legislation if it was favored by the majority of the member states and by those member states which have over 62% of the EU population.<sup>181</sup> Poland believed that this reform of the voting structure would result in an unfair advantage for larger member states such as France and Germany. As a result, Poland opposed the suggested changes.

Another missed opportunity for the Weimar Triangle occurred in the area of agriculture. The EU was embroiled in a prolonged debate over restructuring the Common Agricultural Policy, a compilation of agricultural subsidies and other programs introduced in 1962. Rather than taking a firm position and presenting a unified front, the Weimar Triangle was noticeably silent.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Vogel, "Franco-German-Polish Weimar Triangle," 269.

<sup>181</sup> Europa, Double Majority, accessed on 18 Oct 2014, [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/glossary/double\\_majority\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/double_majority_en.htm).

<sup>182</sup> Lang and Schwarzer, "Consolidating the Weimar Triangle" 2.

More interesting than these apparent failures are the possible reasons why they occurred. Kai-Olaf Lang and Daniela Schwarzer of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs advanced the following theory:

The main responsibility lies with the three governments themselves. Paris was fundamentally skeptical to eastern enlargement and showed no genuine interest in closely cooperating with Poland, the largest Central European accession country. In Berlin, ambitious plans were spelled out which were never to materialize. In Poland, which is traditionally the most “pro-Weimar” of the three countries, sometimes the domestic political situation made a strong European engagement difficult.<sup>183</sup>

This analysis highlights the historical undertones resident within the Weimar Triangle. Another factor in the disappointments mentioned above may have been an honest assessment of capability. The choice by the Weimar Triangle to do nothing may not have been a choice at all, but a realization that the forum had no solutions to recommend.<sup>184</sup> Fortunately, it seems that the three nations learned from their shortcomings. The 2006 summit convened in Mettlach, Germany, with a specific agenda. For the meantime, the Weimar Triangle set aside some of the harder European Union issues and instead concentrated on issues such as organized crime and migration.<sup>185</sup> While the topics were not the most ambitious, the meeting proved that the partnership could produce results when tackling the right problems, and this laid a foundation for future and possibly more aspiring engagements.

## **B. AREAS OF COOPERATION**

With the lessons learned over the last two decades, the Weimar Triangle has the potential to influence future European decisions, but in this time of resource scarcity the three nations must make a concerted decision to focus their efforts. According to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, the Weimar Triangle countries concentrate on three areas of cooperation: political, interregional, and cultural.<sup>186</sup> With these three areas

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<sup>183</sup> Lang and Schwarzer, “Consolidating the Weimar Triangle” 2.

<sup>184</sup> Vogel, “Franco-German-Polish Weimar Triangle,” 269.

<sup>185</sup> Vogel, “Franco-German-Polish Weimar Triangle,” 269.

<sup>186</sup> “Weimar Triangle,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland.

identified, the goal will be to move this partnership from a mere sounding board to a guiding power for the continent.

Political cooperation will be a key to enacting changes with any sort of substance. Before examining how France, Germany, and Poland can effectively collaborate it is critical to appreciate the unique relationships between all three parties. According to Wolfram Vogel, “In order to better understand the motives of the Triangle’s foundation, it is necessary to look at the historical determinants of each of the three bilateral relationships. They have each developed a path dependency of their own that continues to influence the power relationship within the triangle today.”<sup>187</sup>

The strongest of the three bilateral partnerships is the Franco-German tandem. France and West Germany began to rebuild their relationship, literally from the ashes of World War II, by 1950 under the guidance of the Schuman Plan. On May 9 of that year the European Coal and Steel Community was proposed. The ECSC would provide the catalyst for a renewed partnership between the two war-torn countries and the other participants in the ECSC (Italy and the Benelux countries). This agreement marked a new emphasis on supranational organizations and planted the seed for what is known as the EU today. Although driven by good intentions, each country had a secret agenda. France wanted to maintain some sort of control over Germany while at the same time directing the eventual reconstruction of Europe. West Germany was looking for a way to unify with the rest of Western Europe as an equal nation. By 1963 the bilateral relationship had solidified to a point that an official declaration could be made under the Elysée Treaty. Franco-German cooperation has since become increasingly institutionalized, evolving not only into a powerful joint arrangement, but also into a complex relationship within several multilateral organizations that is unmatched throughout the rest of the EU. With the Elysée Treaty as a common banner, the two countries are under constant pressure to find mutual ground on any serious topic that crosses their path. As these two countries, with often divergent political views, have worked toward compromise other states within the European Union have been inspired to cooperate as well.<sup>188</sup>

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187 Vogel, “Franco-German-Polish Weimar Triangle,” 261.

188 Vogel, “Franco-German-Polish Weimar Triangle,” 262–63.

Another relationship with a great deal of history is that of Germany and Poland. Any arrangement between the two countries after World War II was overshadowed by the Soviet Union's domination of Central and Eastern Europe, with Germany having been split into two states and Poland not really having an independent voice. The only significant development between the two countries during the Cold War was the signing of the 1970 Treaty of Warsaw, a German-Polish border agreement. Following the collapse of communism in Europe and German reunification, engagements between the two countries took on a renewed significance. According to Vogel, "In no other bilateral relationship is history such a powerful part of daily politics as in the German-Polish case, and it continues to be so."<sup>189</sup> From a civil perspective, a German-Polish Youth Office, mirrored after a Franco-German example, was established to promote rapprochement. Politically, the relationship was formalized in legal terms by the 1991 Polish-German Treaty of Good Neighbourship and Friendly Cooperation. This treaty put to bed any lingering territorial claims that could sour future German-Polish collaboration. Currently, however, Poland has a hesitant arrangement with Germany. On one hand, Poland is fortunate to profit from Germany's economic success and is grateful for Germany's political guidance and support in bringing Poland closer to the West. On the other hand, at least in the eyes of some Poles, a Germany with strong economic power and political will can be seen as a threat.<sup>190</sup>

The weakest bilateral relationship among the three Weimar nations is that between France and Poland. The lack of enthusiasm and emotion between the two countries may stem from the fact that they have never fought a major conflict against each other. Franco-Polish bilateralism does have a unique history in relation to Germany, mainly that of countering possible German aggression. This began in the sixteenth century and continued throughout the eighteenth century when the daughter of the then Polish King Stanislas Leszczyński married Louis XV. A line referencing Napoleon can

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 263–64.

even be found in the Polish National Anthem.<sup>191</sup> Unfortunately, the bilateral partnership during the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by ambivalence, culminating in France's failure to aid Poland in 1939 and its subsequent neglect of Poland after the war. After 1989 the two nations found common ground again, predictably over issues regarding German reunification and border disputes; and they formalized their partnership in the April 1991 Treaty of Friendship and Solidarity. Although the treaties that Poland signed with Germany and France proposed increased support in political, economic, and cultural development, neither of these arrangements was on par with the Elysée Treaty negotiated between France and Germany.<sup>192</sup>

As these bilateral relationships within the Weimar Triangle continue to develop and interweave into the layers of EU organizations, each nation will find a potential increase in influence. Another way for the Weimar nations to exert influence in Europe is through their individual power within regional organizations. If animated with a common purpose, France, Germany, and Poland have the ability to guide regional discussions in a way that could establish a foundation for interregional consensus across the continent.

For example, Poland's position within the Visegrad Group (VG) provides an opportunity to shape Eastern European and Baltic policies. The VG, comprised of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, is not a fully institutionalized association, but it has become a stable and influential voice within several countries that were formerly in the Soviet sphere. The economic market within the VG has expanded, even during the current EU crisis, and will provide the four nations more clout in political and security affairs.<sup>193</sup>

As for France, it can focus its political will on molding a consensus among the smaller Mediterranean states.<sup>194</sup> In a report of a seminar held in Warsaw in 2009, Olaf

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191 The Polish National Anthem line referred to above is translated as, "Bonaparte has given us the example of how we should prevail."

192 Vogel, "Franco-German-Polish Weimar Triangle," 264–65.

193 "The Visegrad Group in the Common European Process," Open Source, accessed February 3, 2014, [https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS\\_0\\_0\\_200\\_203\\_0\\_43/content/Display/POW/CER2013112525569722?printerFriendly=true](https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_0_43/content/Display/POW/CER2013112525569722?printerFriendly=true).

194 Lang and Schwarzer, "Consolidating the Weimar Triangle" 4.

Osica suggested that France has a keen interest in Mediterranean issues.<sup>195</sup> Due to France's geographic position, it has the ability to play a key role within this region and in organizations such as the Union for the Mediterranean.

Germany, as a strong power within Central Europe, can influence any portion of the continent. It may have a special interest in the Benelux nations that could be cultivated.<sup>196</sup> With the EU currently at 28 member states and likely to expand, even the strongest nations will find it difficult to effectively sway policy. A partnership like the Weimar Triangle provides increased political leverage. If the three countries of the triangle could bring with them strong regional support from smaller nations, the likelihood of agreement on a unified agenda in the EU structure would be greatly improved.

Cultural cooperation is an area in which the Weimar Triangle has truly excelled. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who was Germany's Foreign Minister from 1974 to 1992, declared that, by choosing Weimar, the three countries "intended to show that this new Europe is more than an economic community, that what unites us is a shared European culture, to which all the people of Europe have made a great contribution."<sup>197</sup> The three states have developed several exchanges in areas such as education, youth organizations, art, and music.<sup>198</sup> The focus has predominantly been geared toward young people. Students and artists participate in events such as the Weimar Youth Triangle congress and the Musical Weimar Triangle.<sup>199</sup> Since the inception of the partnership, over 100,000 students from Poland and Germany have decided to earn higher level degrees through the other nation's universities.<sup>200</sup> Results of cross-cultural programs can already be seen in Germany, where Polish is a popular foreign language, second only to English.

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195 "Weimar Triangle in the European Union," Center for International Relations, Warsaw, accessed February 19, 2014, [http://www.weimarer-dreieck.eu/fileadmin/templates/multiflex3/PDF/EN\\_Summary\\_25.3.09\\_Rev.1.pdf](http://www.weimarer-dreieck.eu/fileadmin/templates/multiflex3/PDF/EN_Summary_25.3.09_Rev.1.pdf).

196 Lang and Schwarzer, "Consolidating the Weimar Triangle" 4.

197 Pieper, "Culture in the Weimar Triangle."

198 Ibid.

199 Ibid.

200 Jean Solomonov, "The Weimar Triangle: A Mirror Reflecting Europe, Not As It Is, But As It Should Be," *Europost*, October 25, 2013, <http://www.europost.eu/article?id=8846>.

Finally, the Adam Mickiewicz Award, presented annually since 2006, recognizes individuals for their advancement of reconciliation and cooperation in Europe.<sup>201</sup>

### C. FUTURE OUTLOOK

With an appreciation of the historical context in which the relationships within the Weimar Triangle have developed and an understanding of the areas of cooperation that are priorities for the three countries, an attempt to identify conceivable future efforts is possible. As these nations continue to cooperate, a realization that they are encountering similar challenges in the form of organized crime, environmental degradation, and negative demographic trends may well encourage a collaborative response.<sup>202</sup>

The Weimar Triangle could play an increased role within the international organizations that all three countries belong to, notably the EU and NATO. Perhaps the trilateral partnership could even be the key to bridging the gap between the EU and NATO, especially in areas concerning security. In April 2010, the Weimar Triangle proposed a CSDP initiative that concentrated on reforming EU Battlegroups, establishing a permanent EU HQ, bolstering EU-NATO cooperation through tangible projects, and encouraging countries to collaborate on developing military capabilities to avoid duplication.<sup>203</sup> This proposal was submitted to Lady Catherine Ashton, then the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and helped drive Poland's three priorities during the country's EU presidency in July-December 2011: EU HQ, EU Battlegroups, and Pooling and Sharing.<sup>204</sup> It is this type of consistent and unified action that is needed in order to get results within international organizations.

Another opportunity for the Weimar Triangle to expand its influence is by broadening its own agendas. Rather than confining meetings to heads of state and

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201 "Weimar Triangle," Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland.

202 "Germany: Weimar Triangle Summit 2006 - Joint Declaration," U.S. *Fed News Service, Including U.S. State News* (2006): 2, ProQuest (469711885).

203 Claudia Major and Florian Wassenberg, "Warsaw's Ambitious CSDP Agenda: Polish Council Presidency Seeks Progress on Weimar Triangle Initiative," German Institute for International and Security Affairs (2011): 1, [http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2011C25\\_mjr\\_wsb\\_ks.pdf](http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2011C25_mjr_wsb_ks.pdf).

204 Major and Wassenberg, "Warsaw's Ambitious CSDP Agenda," 1.

government, foreign ministers, and defense ministers, the Weimar Triangle could consider organizing regular meetings of representatives from other ministries. Finance and environmental ministers, both dealing with priority topics for the Weimar Triangle, would benefit greatly from gatherings designed to ensure that the three nations are consistently working toward the same goals.<sup>205</sup>

A third role for the Weimar Triangle could be to increase the efficiency of the EU and NATO. Between these three countries and the regional influence they have, many difficult and uncomfortable topics could be first presented at Weimar Triangle meetings. The Weimar Triangle nations could “test drive” these issues in a much safer and more discreet environment, as opposed to the global stage that the EU and NATO operate on. The Weimar Triangle could act as a test bed for sensitive topics, gauging the possible reactions of other European states. In addition, potential problems could be sorted out; and France, Germany, and Poland could have an opportunity to develop a single voice prior to presenting specific issues to a larger forum. If this was done effectively, topics presented by the Weimar Triangle to the EU and NATO could be vetted and have a greater chance of being well received.<sup>206</sup>

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

As the Cold War came to an end, a difficult time came to a close. Unfortunately, what also culminated was, to some degree, a simpler time—a time of two superpowers standing toe-to-toe, with clear lines drawn and everyone knowing his place. The breakup of the Soviet Union brought with it political complications. International organizations such as the EU, NATO, and, to an extent, the Weimar Triangle now play a much more active and decisive role in global politics. As Poland has joined and participated in these institutions it has seen first-hand that these organizations and the relationships within them operate on several complex levels. This analysis of the Weimar Triangle—complete with its historical promises and disputes, acknowledged areas of cooperation, and hopeful

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<sup>205</sup> “Weimar Triangle in the European Union,” 4.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.



expectations for the future—provides evidence of the intricacies associated with these regional bodies.

One answer to this multifaceted political conundrum may be the Weimar Triangle and comparable regional associations. Its lack of formal institutionalization, which could be construed as a problem, may actually be the recipe for its success.<sup>207</sup> In a world that is growing increasingly more cumbersome due to widespread legislation and entangling alliances, a forum with greater freedom to maneuver and the credibility to discuss current issues in a less confined environment may be able to provide answers and a direction to an otherwise handicapped Europe.

If Poland invests political capital and supports an appropriate agenda, the Weimar Triangle may find a positive place in European politics. Geographically, the three nations of the Weimar Triangle bridge the continent. Whether one sees this bridge going from West to East or new Europe to old Europe is inconsequential. The Weimar Triangle has the ability to help keep Europe united and to strengthen regional cohesion across the continent. In doing so, it will provide an example of political unity to all the states in Europe.

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207 Vogel, “Franco-German-Polish Weimar Triangle,” 268.

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## V. CONCLUSION

Since the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 Poland has decisively looked west for political partnerships, economic models, and strategic security. This thesis has examined how Poland's decision to reintegrate into Europe, particularly through pursuing membership in key Western security institutions, proved to be vital in Poland's post-communist success. Since 1991 Poland has not only gained membership in NATO and the EU, but has also become a productive member within both institutions. During this time, Poland has grown from an inexperienced outsider eager for official affiliations with Western institutions to a confident NATO Ally and EU member determined to influence these institutions in pursuit of critical national priorities.

Poland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1999, but Poland's membership in the Alliance was not a preordained outcome. The 2014 Russian invasion of Ukraine serves as a stark example of a nation that was unable to shed Russian influence and that did not join NATO. The disbanding of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 allowed Poland to independently pursue a collective defense agreement in line with the country's new national priorities. Poland immediately began to modernize its civil-military relations as a foundation for the democratic reforms needed to become a NATO member.<sup>208</sup> Poland's ratification of the 1997 constitution provided the framework to solidify the progressive changes being made throughout the government.

As Poland continued to implement domestic improvements and meet Alliance standards, the country participated in programs such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and Partnership for Peace. By 1999, when Poland became a NATO member, the country was already well integrated into NATO operations. Poland initially could provide only a modest military contribution during the 1995 Bosnian crisis. By 1999 Poland was capable of bearing a larger burden in Kosovo, a responsibility which it continues to shoulder today. These two operations were instrumental in easing Poland into the coalition environment and helped prepare the military for its herculean effort with the

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<sup>208</sup> Simon, *Poland and NATO*, 78.

International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Poland's leadership in Afghanistan distinguished it as a fully capable military power among the other Allies.

This new credibility is what made Poland's lack of direct participation with air or naval forces in Libya so noticeable. Poland's absence from Operation Unified Protector in 2011 could be construed by some as discontent within the ranks of NATO, considering that Poland has always been a staunch supporter of Allied action. On the other hand, Poland's decision to abstain from OUP involvement can be seen as a sign that Poland has fully matured. Poland stayed out of the Libya operation for domestic and strategic reasons, but in doing so expressed the confidence of a nation that is not afraid to take a stand and have its voice heard. Though Poland's attitude on Libya may not have been convenient for NATO at this particular moment, having a strong and vocal member on NATO's eastern frontier is an advantage.

As Poland continues to grow into its role within NATO, the country will be in a prime position to influence the Alliance. With NATO's drawdown in Afghanistan, political pundits and military strategists wondered what NATO's new roles would be. Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 seems to have answered this question—that is, chief among the Alliance's tasks will be collective defense and deterrence. Poland, a long-time skeptic about Russian intentions, finds itself once again near the front line of Russian aggression. As the largest and most capable of the former Soviet satellite states, it will be up to Poland to take the lead in convincing NATO of this re-emerging threat. The potential for a future Russian threat is what initially drove Poland into the arms of NATO during the 1990s. It seems that the current Russian threat will now give credibility to Poland's voice in NATO.

Poland's European Union membership came with its own set of hurdles. While NATO required Poland to adopt civil-military reforms, the EU demanded that Poland incorporate a sweeping array of political and economic changes spanning every major ministry of the Polish government. Some of the more contentious negotiations involved migrant workers and agricultural subsidies. As Polish domestic politics continued to mature and the EU acknowledged Poland's potential contribution to the organization, both sides found enough common ground to formalize the relationship in 2004.

As the economic and political benefits of joining the European Union began to take effect throughout Poland, another possible benefit seemed to materialize. The EU attempted to broaden its influence by developing a Common Security and Defense Policy. This foray into foreign policy and defense developed slowly in the EU, not gaining much traction until 1998 during the historic Anglo-French summit in St. Malo. By the time Poland became an EU member, CSDP provided Warsaw with another security vehicle.

Poland's initial reaction to CSDP was cautious, because Warsaw did not want to support anything that might undermine NATO's promise of collective defense. After the events of World War II it is no surprise that Poland would favor a strong U.S. bilateral relationship and decisive NATO competence over a newly formed defensive capability in the EU. Over time, however, Poland's mindset has shifted toward a more balanced approach to CSDP.<sup>209</sup> This pragmatic view is evident in the several EU missions that Poland has participated in and in the acknowledgment of the EU as a foreign and defense policy actor in the 2007 National Security Strategy and the 2009 National Defense Strategy.

Although the EU, through CSDP, has played a more influential role in foreign and defense policy than it did before 1998–1999, NATO is still tasked with the supreme responsibility of collective defense for EU members that are NATO allies (such as Poland). The EU does not dispute this delineation. In fact, Article 42, paragraph 7, of the Lisbon Treaty clearly states:

Commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation.<sup>210</sup>

History has proven that peace throughout Europe cannot be taken for granted, and that a strong and secure Europe is a keystone to worldwide stability. How involved the

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209 Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, 149.

210 European Union, *The Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union* (Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union, 2010), 39.

EU can be in maintaining peace remains to be seen. The European Union originally provided Poland with an option to rejoin the Western world. Now CSDP provides Poland with yet another option to secure its national interests.

From the chaotic collapse of communism in Europe emerged a rare example of far-sighted and proactive governance, an informal structure of cooperation known as the Weimar Triangle. NATO and the EU both sought to stabilize Europe by aiding, and in some cases, incorporating post-communist nations, though the sheer size and bureaucracy of these institutions—and political factors—limited the speed at which they could act. The Weimar Triangle, on the other hand, was established in 1991, with the simple goal of integrating Poland into Western Europe. This trilateral relationship between Germany, France, and Poland enabled Poland to more effectively pursue, and eventually gain, membership in NATO and the EU.

In 2004, when the EU membership goal was met, the Weimar Triangle reinvented its purpose. With Poland's reintegration into Western Europe complete, the Weimar Triangle provides a forum for political discussion and cultural exchange. Its lack of formal institutionalization, which could be construed as a problem, may actually be a strength.<sup>211</sup> In a diplomatic arena that is growing increasingly more cumbersome due to widespread legislation and overlapping international institutions, a forum with greater freedom to maneuver and the credibility to discuss current issues in a less confined environment may be able to provide answers and a direction to an otherwise handicapped Europe.

Poland has successfully integrated into three Western security institutions—NATO, the EU, and the Weimar Triangle. The criteria for joining these institutions enabled a democratic transformation to occur throughout the Polish government and Polish society. However, the time of Poland's transition is complete and the need for Poland to move from efficiency to innovation has arrived.<sup>212</sup> Today, Poland is in a

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211 Vogel, "France-German-Polish Weimar Triangle," 268.

212 Pawel Swieboda, "Central Europe Ten Years After: Punching Above Weight in EU?," *Barcelona Center for International Affairs*, no. 271 (October 2014), [http://www.cidob.org/en/publicaciones/opinion/europa/europa\\_central\\_diez\\_anos\\_despues\\_supera\\_las\\_expectativas\\_en\\_la\\_ue](http://www.cidob.org/en/publicaciones/opinion/europa/europa_central_diez_anos_despues_supera_las_expectativas_en_la_ue).

position to help lead these organizations into the future. Poland's geostrategic position on the continent ensures that Polish national concerns often overlap with European concerns. Poland, on the eastern frontier of Europe, is in a unique position to influence and guide NATO, the EU, and the Weimar Triangle through the current strategic environment.

By examining Poland's successful Westernization, a possible roadmap could be provided for other Central and Eastern European countries that are struggling to make similar political and military adjustments. Poland is in a position to act as a bridge to the east through its cultural links, shared history, and practical experience in the transition to Western institutions. Poland can serve as an expert and mentor in two capacities—for the countries looking to join these institutions and for the institutions preparing to receive new members.

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